**you swallow my heart and flee (but i want it back now)**

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/29284659.

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|---|---|
| Rating: | Explicit |
| Archive Warning: | Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings |
| Category: | M/M |
| Fandom: | Hannibal (TV) |
| Relationships: | Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, mentions of past Molly/Will - Relationship |
| Characters: | Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Jack Crawford, Molly Graham, Chiyoh (Hannibal) |
| Additional Tags: | Post-Episode: s03e13 The Wrath of the Lamb, Pining, Diary/Journal, Dark Will Graham, Secret Messages, Sexual Fantasy, Masturbation, Love Letters, Explicit Sexual Content, Anal Sex, Oral Sex, First Kiss, Love Confessions, Minor Character Death, Kitchen Sex, Marriage Proposal, Couch Sex, Floor Sex, Light Bondage, Dom/sub Undertones, Orgasm Delay/Denial, Top Will Graham, Bottom Will Graham, Top Hannibal Lecter, Bottom Hannibal Lecter, Praise Kink, Hannibal is still kind of an asshole btw, Light Angst, Canon-Typical Violence, Fights, Break Up, Makeup Sex, Happy Ending, Marriage, Living Together, Murder Husbands |
| Language: | English |
| Collections: | The best of Hannigram, Brilliant Works, Hannibal |
| Stats: | Published: 2021-02-08 Completed: 2021-05-16 Words: 65,400 Chapters: 13/13 |

# you swallow my heart and flee (but i want it back now)

by hannigramized

Summary

After they killed Francis Dolarhyde, Will was certain he pulled Hannibal off the cliff with him, but when he wakes up, he’s still on the edge of the bluff, surrounded by FBI agents and paramedics. It’s apparent Hannibal got away safely, and Will is put on the job to help find him.

When Will finds Hannibal’s journal in his old cell, filled with entries about, and drawings of, himself, he sneaks it into the waistband of his pants and takes it home. It forces Will into dealing with his own feelings, and figuring out what he wants.

Will can only hope the journal gives him the answers he seeks.

Notes

I think someone on Twitter said they want to see Will read Hannibal's prison journal, and my mind started wandering from that, and this idea was born. I'm not entirely sure how this is going to go. Looking forward to seeing how everyone thinks of this.

Title a line from the poem 'Dirty Valentine' by Richard Siken

# Chapter 1

Will holds tight to Hannibal and pulls them towards the edge of the cliff. That much he remembers. He remembers the feeling of falling, of Hannibal's arms wrapped tightly around him. He thinks he must have hit his head, remembers the pain, as if his skull was splitting open, before everything went black.

It's only when he wakes up, brings a hand to his head, feeling the bump on his skull, looks around to see a house behind him, that he realizes. Concrete under his body. Blood is still seeping into his otherwise dry clothes. There are voices. Distant, but still there. Or at least he thinks they're distant. His body is not swimming in the sea below, but his mind is certainly swimming in his skull.

The house. The cliff house. Francis Dolarhyde's body, only feet away. Footsteps running, sirens blaring. *Is that a helicopter?* Will thinks. He looks up to the sky toward the sound, and has to shield his eyes from the searchlights bearing down on the cliff. His eyes hurt, his head pounds, his wounds throb. His entire body aches.

Someone is kneeling down at his side now, making quick work of unbuttoning his shirt to assess the wound on his chest. They're saying something to him. *What are they saying?* Will can't focus on the words, can't focus on the face in front of him. Faces? Will sees more than one, but no. Just one person. *Just one person,* he tells himself.

But not the person he wants to be seeing right now.

"H-Hannibal," Will croaks out. "Where's- where is Hannibal?"

The person tending to his wounds does not say a word, just makes sure he's stable before loading him onto a stretcher. Will would fight back if he could. He can see Jack Crawford across the patio. Hazy, everything's so hazy, but it's him, Will knows him well enough to know. Can hear his voice calling out orders.

" *Find Lecter!"* Jack's voice booms. The clearest thing Will has heard this entire time. Everything else is covered by a ringing in his head, by the sound of sirens and helicopters.

Will feels a flood of relief. Hannibal got away, he's not back in prison, not bleeding out or dead on the ground. There's a voice in Will's head suggesting Hannibal pushed Will away and fell off the cliff himself. But he remembers those arms wrapped tight around him, tight as he fell. He just fell to the ground, not into the water.

Hannibal must have set him down. Knocked him out? Hannibal knocked him out, Will decides. Knocked him out and ran.

*So much for feeling a daily stab of hunger for me, and finding nourishment in the sight of me,* Will laughs to himself. Well, Will certainly aches. For Hannibal? He's not sure. His entire body, though? Without a doubt. Everything hurts.

A voice makes it through the haziness of his mind and he realizes he is being loaded into the back of an ambulance.

“You’re going to be just fine, Mr Graham,” a young man says. His face focuses just enough and Will can tell he can’t be much older than twenty. So young to be seeing the horrors like the one left behind at that house on the bluff. Will remembers being a young cop, seeing things like this. The nightmares have never gone away, he just became a participant in the things that cause them.

Will tries to smile at him, to let him know he hears him, but the pain in his cheek is too much and he cries out instead. He reaches up for it, pleased to realize he’s not handcuffed to the stretcher. The paramedic does take his hand though, directs it back down to his side.

“We’ll get you stitched up,” the man assures him.

Next thing Will knows he is waking up in a bed, no longer in the back of a moving ambulance. There’s a beeping sound, sterile smell, voices in the hall. Hospital. He opens his eyes and the lights are dimmed in the room. A window tells him it’s daytime. He wonders how long he was out for.

His head still swims, but a different kind, likely from painkillers. His arm is hooked up to an IV, there’s different things attached to him, likely monitoring his heart.

The door of his room is open and he sees someone sitting in a chair against the wall outside, just their arm showing. An FBI jacket.

Will lifts his hands and sighs in relief. No cuffs. He’s not in custody, just has a guard for protection. Or to notify Jack when he wakes. Both, probably.

He presses the button to call for a nurse.

“Mr Graham, you’re awake,” a nurse exclaims softly when she walks in. She checks on a few things before saying, “I bet you’re wondering what happened.”

Will nods and opens his mouth to speak, but the stitches in his cheek pull uncomfortably and he closes his mouth again. The nurse goes back into the hall without another word.

A doctor walks in a moment later, says verbatim the exact thing the nurse said to him.

“You lost a lot of blood. Thankfully emergency services were called in time before you lost too much,” the doctor explains. How did he call emergency services? He thought he had fallen off a cliff, and had woken up to paramedics around him. Then-

“Hannibal,” he whispers to himself.

The doctor doesn’t confirm nor deny that, maybe he didn’t even hear Will. He just continues, “You suffered a stab wound to the cheek, and one to the chest, closer to your shoulder. A few inches over and it could have hit something vital. You were lucky in that regard, though surely it would have been better not being stabbed at all,” the doctor says, offering a weak smile.

Will just nods numbly. Hannibal called the ambulance. Or called Jack. Didn't leave him for dead. But why did he leave? Why couldn't he have tended to Will's injuries himself, taken him with wherever he went? Will could cry.

"You also suffered from a concussion when you hit your head. There was blood found on one of the large rocks near the cliff edge to suggest that's what you hit. It's hard to say if you collapsed onto it or if you were deliberately thrown into it," the doctor explains. "And Agent Crawford has been waiting for you to wake up. He has a lot of questions and maybe a few more answers for you. We won't let him come in until you're up to it, though."

"Send him in. Please," Will manages to say. His face hurts, stings and pulls with each word.

The doctor gives him a nod and leaves the room.

He doesn't know how long it is before Jack Crawford walks into the room. He shuts the door behind him, careful to make sure it doesn't close too loudly. There is the soft click of the door shutting, then a chair being slid across the floor. Will watches expectantly as Jack sits down in the chair right next to Will's hospital bed.

Will turns his head just slightly to look at him.

"Tell me what you remember, Will," Jack says, voice calm and quiet.

"I remember the convoy being intercepted. I got knocked out then, I remember that," Will says. He was knocked out twice in the same night. He'll be surprised if he ever recovers from this concussion. He remembers willingly getting into the car with Hannibal. *'Going my way?'* Hannibal had asked him. He can't tell Jack. "I don't… next thing I knew I was in the passenger seat of a police car. Ha- Lecter was in the driver's seat."

"Why didn't you call me?"

*Why didn't I?* Will asks himself. He knows the answer, but he needs to lie. Needs to prove his innocence to Jack, even if it is all a lie.

"He took my phone or I lost it in the transport van. I remember not being able to find it."

Jack nods, seeming to believe him entirely. "Then what?"

"He drove us to the house..."

Truth.

"...I was scared that if I ran he would kill me..."

Lie.

"...We talked. He had clothes for me to change into, cooked us dinner..."

Truth.

"...I pretended to be his friend, pretended to be an accomplice to him, pretended to be okay with whatever he had planned, because I was scared..."

Lie.

"...We all know what he's capable of."

*Truth.*

"And what about Dolarhyde?" Jack asks.

"He shot Hannibal through the glass window, then came into the house. I reached for my gun, but he stabbed me in the face. I know I pulled the knife out and stabbed him back. We ended up outside. I ended up with a knife sticking out of my shoulder," Will tells him. "I know I gutted him with it. I don't think I had another choice."

"His throat was ripped out. With teeth. Lecter helped you kill him," Jack tells him.

Will nods. He remembers. Of course he does. He had never felt more alive than when they were working together to defeat Francis Dolarhyde. "But then he left me to bleed on the pavement when it was all said and done."

*"This is all I ever wanted for you, Will. For both of us."* Hannibal had said as they stared into each other's eyes. Blood covering both of their bodies, hands gripping each other, trying to stay on their feet.

*"It's beautiful,"* Will had responded. He had rested his head on Hannibal's chest, had brought Hannibal's hand up to hold his waist.

And Will had thought killing them both was his only option. If only it had worked, because now he's in a hospital bed, in so much pain, having to lie to Jack about the things he thought and felt. And Hannibal is not here.

Will brings himself back to the present, to ask Jack what he's been dying to know.

"Was Hannibal found?"

Jack sighs and shakes his head. "We have as many people looking for him as we possibly can afford. He called me, you know. With your cell phone."

"So, he did take it," Will murmurs.

"He didn't leave you to die, and I need to understand why. He's always had a soft spot for you," Jack says. As if Will doesn't already know. As if saying it out loud changes anything. "We need your help, Will. You found him three years ago in Italy. All on your own. He turned himself in *for you.* You're our best shot at catching him."

"I don't know, Jack," Will says. "If he wanted me to know where he is, he would have taken me with him. Or he would have walked right back into his cell."

“Do you believe that? Truly?”

“Yes,” Will lies.

He knows that Hannibal would leave bread crumbs for him to follow. There’s no way he wouldn’t. If he called Jack to tell him about the house, risking being caught as he made a getaway from the house, then he wants Will to follow as soon as he heals. It would make it a hell of a lot easier if Will can use the FBIs resources.

“But, I’ll help,” Will says after a moment. “Just tell me what I need to do.”

“Get better,” Jack tells him. “When you’re all healed up, you can help with the search.”

Will nods. His face hurts, his head hurts, and he wants to stop talking. Jack seems to notice, pats his leg, then stands.

“You know him better than any of us, Will. When you’re out of here, we’re gonna have you go through the contents of his cell. See if he left notes in books, or hinted in a journal,” Jack says from the door frame. “Until then, I’ll stop by and update you when I can. You have a guard outside your door in case Lecter comes.”

Then Jack leaves.

As if a single guard would stand a chance against Hannibal Lecter, and Will is sure Jack knows that. Hannibal has gotten into guarded hospital rooms before, that’s for sure. Abel Gideon’s comes to mind, and Will knows Jack has likely thought the same.

It is not at all likely Hannibal would risk coming in to see Will, even less likely he would make an attempt to take him away, or hurt him. No, Will knows Hannibal is biding his time somewhere. Maybe he isn’t thinking about Will at all. Maybe he did leave in an attempt to distance himself from Will Graham and everything that reminds him of Will.

He didn’t walk back into his cell because Will visited him there. Will’s presence is a part of the space now. Because Alana likely reminds Hannibal of Will all the time, taunts him with anything she finds out about Will’s life. Will wouldn’t put it past her.

So maybe Hannibal doesn’t want Will to find him, but Will has finally accepted the fact that the two of them always find their ways back to each other. When Bedelia told Will that Hannibal is in love with him, he made a choice. And his choice was to die by Hannibal’s side, die in his arms.

Because it was that, or live without him, something Will finds it harder and harder to do, and he realizes laying in his hospital bed that he does ache for Hannibal. Needs him like he needs air to breathe, which now he barely has any air filling his chest, a panic rising over him as this revelation overcomes him.

If Hannibal does not want Will to find him, does not want Will in his life, then Will understands that. But he is not going to accept it until he hears it from Hannibal himself. He is going to find him, he is going to, and he’s not going to turn him in, he’s not going to try to

kill him. He needs answers. He needs to hear everything from the man's own mouth. Needs to know if the love is true, or if Bedelia was just lying to set him up for heartbreak.

Will spends the next days in the hospital, bored as ever. No phone, because Hannibal took it. Jack says they tracked the phone to a road twenty minutes from the house, but it was left in a ditch, only a few percent battery left when it was finally found. Hannibal would have been long gone by the time they tracked it there.

Molly comes to visit after a week. And Will does the only thing he thinks is right, and tells her that it's not going to work out between them. Sweet Molly, who tried so hard to love Will, likely really, truly did love him. But not the real him. Not the Will that tag team killed Francis Dolarhyde. Fought side by side with a killer, to kill another. Not the Will that killed Randall Tier and mutilated his body. Not the Will that set Chilton up to be nearly killed.

She loves a fake version of himself. Who works with the FBI to catch killers. Not the version that has willingly eaten a person, willingly killed more than one person. Not the version that called it beautiful as he stood embracing another man, covered in blood, black in the moonlight.

Molly cries when Will tells her they should separate. He says it's because he can't be what she needs, can't promise attacks like Francis's won't happen again when he goes back to work with the FBI. Will holds her hand as she cries. She understands, though.

"You don't have to lie to me, Will," Molly whispers, wiping the tears from her cheeks. "It's because of him, isn't it? You love him."

There's no accusation in her tone, no anger, no disgust. Just hurt.

Will sighs. "I have to help find him," is what he says. It is an answer, and a non-answer. It's true, but it is not a confession.

"Did you love me?" Molly asks.

"I did. I do. But it's not enough to love you if I can't ensure your safety," Will says. "I'm dangerous. I told you I would come back differently, didn't I? I don't think I'm meant to live a normal life. If we stay together, he'll come. And he will come at a time when we don't expect it, can't save ourselves. I can't put you or Wally in danger like that. It's… better this way."

"I understand, Will," she says. She wipes the tears away, clears her throat. Her voice comes out strong now, "You still own your house is Wolf Trap, right?"

"Yes," Will tells her.

She nods. "I'll start packing up your stuff and bring it there for you. Unless you were planning on going somewhere else."

"I'll live in Wolf Trap," Will confirms.

“Which dogs do you want?” Molly asks. And Will knew that question was coming, he’s been thinking about it all week.

“Buster and Winston,” Will says. “Unless you want me to take more. I’m not taking any less.”

“Wally loves the dogs. He takes good care of them. You take Buster and Winston when you get out of here, and if you want more later on, just call me. I know you’ll have no problem finding more, though,” she smiles. With a sigh then, “So, that’s it then? We’re going to divorce because you’re in love with the Chesapeake Ripper.”

Will cringes at the words, how she says them like it is no big deal to her. Like she-

“You knew all along,” Will whispers. Molly knew, before Will even knew.

“I did,” Molly says. “Well, I wasn’t completely sure, of course. But it was… you didn’t do a good job of hiding it.”

Will frowns. He didn’t know until a few days ago. How could he have…

But Molly answers his question without him even voicing it. “I saw the way you reacted every time they showed him on TV, Will. Or how you would start to tell stories about him, so much fondness in your voice or on your face, until you realized who you were talking about, and you’d force yourself to stop. I know he sent you a letter, I know you waited to read it until you were alone, I know you agreed to the case because you knew it meant you would get to see him again.”

Will does not respond to any of it. He knows it is all true.

“You have a photo of you two in your wallet. Right between me, and a picture of your friend Beverly. You’ve kept his contact in your phone,” Molly says. “I’m not mad.”

“I know.”

“I’m sad, sure. I went into this relationship, this marriage, knowing about that part of your life. I just thought…”

“I did too. It was supposed to be behind me,” Will tells her.

“But it never really will be.”

“No,” Will agrees. “It won’t be.”

“Whatever you have planned, Will, don’t tell me,” Molly says. “But please be careful.”

“I will be,” Will assures her.

When he finally gets out of the hospital, Jack is there to pick him up. He hands Will his old phone, fully charged, likely picked through completely by the FBI to see if Hannibal left anything for Will in it. Will knows he wouldn’t be that stupid.

He hands Will the car keys, and says, “Found them on the kitchen counter of the house on the bluff. You get settled, and give me a call. Your car is still at the BSHCI. That’s where we’re going to be anyway,” Jack tells him.

“We? Don’t you have better things to do than pick through his cell with me?” Will asks. It’ll feel like he’s being babysat, first off. Second off, it’ll be really hard for him to do what he wants. To hide information the FBI might find useful, to steal information *he* might find useful.

“Well, yes. But that’s still a priority. I don’t want you to have to do it alone,” Jack says.

Jack drives him to Wolf Trap, to the little house he missed so much. He kept it in case he and Molly wanted a weekend away. In case *he* needed a weekend away, really. And because he knew it would likely always come back down to this.

“Can we go today? I’d rather get my car, get a head start on all of it.”

“Of course.”

So they stop at the house in Wolf Trap. So Will can change his clothes and see the dogs. Molly dropped them off earlier that day, along with a bunch of his clothes, and his fishing stuff. The house is still furnished like he left it, no need for any of his when Molly had a house already full of furniture.

She said she’ll bring his books over another day, but Will wanted to tell her not to bother. He didn’t, just thanked her.

Buster and Winston are happy to see him, and happy to see Jack again, too. Will finds the boxes of his clothes and takes a pair of jeans and a flannel into the bathroom to change. He feeds the dogs, lets them go outside for a bit, then calls them back in.

Once everything is settled with the dogs, Jack drives Will to Baltimore, to the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. To look for Hannibal.

# Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> A new chapter earlier than planned! This is like. all pornographic and I am not proud of myself for this. Anyways. Let me know what you think!

The rest of the afternoon is spent digging through boxes. Will takes one box of books and sits on the floor in Hannibal's old cell. Jack sits a few feet away with his own box. They talk, but not about what happened recently.

Will is glad that Jack is trusting him, but hates how he is betraying the man. Jack has forgiven him for so much, has been a friend, has done so much for him over the years, and Will is using him to get to Hannibal first. But Jack, for some reason, thinks Will is still his man. After all this time, after everything to suggest he's been Hannibal's all along.

He would have ran with Hannibal if he wasn't left at the house. He would have left everything behind, and ran. This time he wasn't even given the chance, not like the last time.

"God," Jack mutters across the room. He's holding a book open in his lap, and Will can see that it's all handwritten. There's something on Jack's face that looks like disgust. "Nope. I can't read this. No thank you."

Jack throws a journal into a pile of things that don't seem promising, but Jack's reaction suggests that it might have something interesting. Will stands up and walks over to the pile and bends down to pick it up.

"Will, I highly suggest we pass that one on to someone else," Jack says before Will can open it. Will goes to open a page and Jack says urgently, "I really would not."

"What's wrong with it?" Will asks, completely amused. "You're the head of the BAU, Jack. What? Is it all in depth murder fantasies? Surely you can read that."

"It's not that, Will."

"It looked handwritten, and you're just going to throw it into a discard pile without reading it? It could have something useful," Will says again. He holds it up in one hand, gestures towards his spot on the floor. "I'm going to look through it."

"Will, seriously, *you* especially will not want to read that."

But Will is already sitting back down on the floor and opening it to the first page. Just a single word in the center of the endsheet. *Will.*

He flips to the first entry. It's dated six months after Hannibal turned himself in.

*I think of Will often. How I miss his smile, and his quick wit. The way his hair would fall into his eyes, and how he would attempt to tame it, but always failed. Even the aftershave that I hated so much would be a welcome scent should it come wafting through the air holes in my cell.*

Will reads the handwritten journal entry and his heart aches in his chest. It is nothing like Jack was acting like it was. He reads the rest of the page, and it's nothing that would warrant the reaction Jack gave it.

*I turned myself in for him. He is the only person who could deny me my freedom and I would allow to do so. I needed him to know where I am, but he does not want to know where I am. It has been six months since that night outside his home. Down on my knees in the snow, watching him turn and go back into his house. I saw him again when he testified at my trial. Not again since then.*

*"Can you please describe your relationship with Doctor Lecter?" Will had been asked. "Were you two romantically involved?"*

*And Will looked me dead in the eyes, and spoke, "Doctor Lecter was my psychiatrist, and became my friend, then framed me for murder. When I was released from the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, I pretended to continue to be his friend to get information from him. There was nothing more between us."*

*I am not used to the feeling of heartbreak and every time I have felt something that could be described as such, it was at Will's hand. And yet, no matter how badly it hurts, I continue to ache for him.*

*There was a hint of apology in Will's eyes, when he looked at me, as if he did not fully believe what he was saying. I will never know because he will not come see me, nor will he answer my letters. Not a day goes by where I do not think of him.*

Will feels like he could cry reading this. He glances over at Jack, who has turned his back to look through more books.

He remembers Hannibal's trial vividly. He remembers being asked if they were romantically involved and feeling his chest tighten at the words. They had never officially put a label on their relationship, but Will had always known that their interactions were more intimate than that of friends. Much more so than that of a doctor and patient.

Never did he think he would actually find himself in love with the man. But when Molly said what she said in the hospital, Will had time to reflect on his time with Hannibal. He was in love with him all along. He could just never let himself think it in words. Especially not after everything Hannibal had done to him.

How could he love someone who manipulated and lied to him, killed his only friend, killed their surrogate daughter, tried to kill *him?* That is why he never wanted to admit it. Because it was always wrong. It still is. Now, he's just tired of denying himself.

When he flips to the second page, he realizes what Jack was talking about and has to bite back a laugh. Will can't help but think Hannibal did this on purpose. Wrote an entry like this so people would feel uncomfortable reading the rest of the journal.

Dated a week after the first.

*I do not touch myself often in here. While Alana has seen that part of me, I do not typically enjoy having an audience in the form of security cameras in every corner of my cell. That said, I am a human being.*

Will figures Jack got about this far, tried to read the next few lines, and that is when he decided to call it quits.

*I think of him when I do. Will. I imagine those delicate fingers wrapped around my cock, slowly and teasingly, stroking me. I imagine those beautiful pink lips kissing my own, before moving down my body and taking me into his mouth. There are times when I push a finger into myself, pretending it's him. There is no lubricant here, and with that, I have to make due with my own saliva.*

*It is not as pleasant as my imagination wants it to be, but picturing Will bringing me pleasure makes it all the more satisfying. One day I long for it to truly be his hands, and his mouth-*

Will shifts uncomfortably where he sits on the floor, feels his pants getting tighter where his own cock is interested. Heat rises in his cheeks and he doesn't even bother reading the rest of the page. It feels like he's intruding on a private moment. Even if the private moment has been written with him in mind.

He flips the page and chokes on his own spit when he sees the drawing there.

It's himself, that's for sure. Lips wrapped around the head of a cock, eyes looking up through his bangs. A hand resting on his head, fingers just slightly curled into his hair. Will knows it's Hannibal's hand, has seen them enough to know. Which can only mean that is Hannibal's dick in his mouth.

Will slams the book shuts and sets it down next to him. He puts his head in his hands and lets out a shaky, humorless laugh.

Jack turns and looks at him, a slight smirk on his face.

"I told you not to read it."

"The first page did not seem that bad," Will mutters. The next two are not *bad* , either, not by a long shot. He needs to keep playing the victim card, he knows. Honestly, he wants to keep reading, but he knows he can't do it in front of a Jack. "Second and third page…"

"Yeah," Jack agrees. After a moment, "Did you know?"

"I, um," Will starts. "Doctor Du Maurier said Hannibal is in love with me. I didn't know whether or not to believe her. I had been hoping it was not true."

Lie after lie after *lie.*

Hannibal owns his heart, his mind. He needs to find him. Now more than ever, he wants to find him.

“Well, I don’t know if I’d call that love, but he seems to want something, that’s for sure,” Jack says.

“Yeah,” Will breathes. He needs to find a way to get this journal home. He knows that if he can just keep reading it, he will find something that leads him to Hannibal one way or another. With Jack here, it would be impossible to sneak possible evidence out of the cell. Even if Jack isn’t going to read it, someone is going to be put to the task.

For the next hour, Will skims through books, looking for underlined words or handwritten notes in the margins.

“You don’t think he would go back to Italy do you?” Jack asks. He holds up the book he’s looking through. The Merchant of Venice.

Will can’t help but laugh. “No, I don’t think he would, but I don’t blame you for trying.”

Jack laughs too and throws the book into the discard pile.

They flip through pages of books, get through three of the twelve boxes before Jack says he needs to get home.

“Early morning tomorrow,” Jack says. “You heading home too?”

Will knows this is his chance to be alone, so he shakes his head. “I’m going to keep looking. I’ll write down some notes if I think of anything to run by you.”

Jack nods once and leaves out the door of the cell.

Will goes through some more books, writes down some of the notes Hannibal made in the margins. He looks through different journals, but most of them are blank, or just filled with drawings of buildings and animals. All the things he thinks could possibly be useful will be written in his own notebook, on a page separate from the one meant for Jack.

*... I dream of going back to the Uffizi Gallery one day… Show Will Florence ...*

*... Go home to Lithuania, to see what became of Chiyoh’s prisoner. But I cannot do it alone…*

*... People who I will one day call upon if the chance presents itself ... Alana Bloom… The judge of my trial… Matthew Brown. I would like to share these kills with someone…*

Will grips the journal in his hand reading that last name. Remembering what he did to Hannibal by proxy. Matthew Brown is imprisoned, but Will is sure Hannibal is smart enough to break him out.

All of these things could be useful to the investigation, but Will knows that Hannibal would never go by himself. These are all of his plans for Will. The FBI will not find him in any of those places, not unless Will is there as well. He writes them on the page for Jack.

The page for himself remains blank. He knows it's not going to be something as obvious as "I am going to be in this place, on this day," but it's going to be something small, something easily overlooked. And he knows it's going to be in that book with the pornographic drawing of himself. The book *addressed* to himself.

Unsure if the cameras in the room are still up and working, Will knows he needs to be crafty about this particular theft. Jack is aware of the journal's existence, but nothing has been catalogued yet. There's no physical proof of this book, other than the possible camera. It helps that all the journals look the same.

Will takes off his jacket, having been wearing it the entire time, and casually sets it over the journal on the floor. He spends the next hour writing nonsense in his own notebook, flipping through other books. Then he starts picking books up from the floor and putting them into boxes. Makes it look like he's checking under his jacket for more, but doesn't find any.

When he gets everything cleaned up from the floor, he picks up his jacket in his arms, the journal tucked nicely inside, picks up his own notebook, and walks out of the cell. He finds the nearest bathroom and goes in, puts the journal in the waistband of his jeans, tucked into the small of his back, and pulls his jacket on over it.

Then he leaves the BSHCI and heads home.

All he can think about the entire drive home is the journal sitting on the passenger seat of his car.

At home, he realizes he has no food in his house, so he orders himself a pizza. No booze, either, so after he eats his pizza, he goes to the liquor store. He will not be able to read this journal for the first time sober.

After he gets the initial shock of it out of his system, assisted by alcohol, then he will get down to business and actually try to find something.

Will settles down on his couch, doesn't even bother with a glass, just takes the entire bottle of whiskey with him.

He opens back up to the second entry and decides he needs to finish reading that.

*I bring myself off thinking about releasing down his throat. Thinking about how he would kiss me after, how I would taste myself on his tongue.*

*Yet I open my eyes, and he is not here, just myself and my own sticky hand. Alone in the dark, wishing, hoping. But Will likely does not think of me this way. I know he is engaged to be married now. Alana came by to tell me, to rub in my face that Will can never be mine.*

Will's cock stirs in his pants as he rereads the entire page. Tears also prick into his eyes. Damn Hannibal for making him feel more than one thing at once.

He knows very well that Hannibal must have known he would one day escape. There is no way he would write these entries down, no way he would use such crude language, without it being important somehow. Will thinks he would die if he heard Hannibal say the word 'cock' out loud.

Laughter bubbles out of his chest at the idea of Hannibal sitting down to write sexual fantasies on paper, just to make people like Jack or Alana uncomfortable reading the journal. No, Hannibal would never do this without motive, Will knows that.

Make everyone too uncomfortable to read the journal, so he could hide something somewhere that only Will could find. He probably went back and added a clue during his final days at the hospital. Always knowing how well Will can figure him out. Never doubting his mind or how much it is capable of.

Will grins alone in his house and turns the page.

The drawing again. Drawn in pencil on the back of the previous entry. On the adjacent page is another entry, dated just a few days after the last.

*To continue what I have begun putting into words in my last entry, that is not all I think about in regards to Will Graham. No, I think about a life with him, one where we have a home together, share a bed nightly, eat meals together.*

*I would allow him as many dogs as he pleased, allow him to choose the location of our house, even if it's miles away from the nearest city, even if there were no opera houses or museums within driving distance.*

*To curl up on a couch together, or sit with Will in my lap in an armchair, reading or whispering to each other. Holding hands. Touching, always, or as often as possible.*

Will has to set the book down and take a walk around the house for a few minutes, trying to reign in these feelings he's having. Tears have been threatening to fall the entire time, his cock has been half hard from the previous entry and the drawing, his chest feels tight from this current entry.

They could have had a life. Maybe they still can, but they will never be able to get back the time lost. If Will would have just accepted Hannibal into his life, ran away when asked, this would have never happened.

Hannibal would have been saying these words to Will's face, or *doing these things.* And Will wouldn't have to read them out of Hannibal's prison journal when Hannibal has fucked off to god knows where. Without him.

Will gets a glass of water from the tap, drinks it all standing in front of the sink, then returns to the couch. He picks the journal back up and takes a deep breath before reading the rest of the page.

*Of course, following the time we spend sitting together, I would take Will to our shared bedroom. We would carefully undress each other, unbuttoning shirts, unzipping pants. Hands exploring each other's bodies. Learning every curve, and dip, and scar, over and over again. Never getting enough.*

*By this time in this fantasy, we would have been together months, maybe even years. We would know exactly where to touch each other. I would kiss Will deeply and passionately, would allow my tongue to taste the inside of his mouth as I please.*

Will knows that this is more Hannibal's speed, more like him, more genuine, than the last one. Not that Hannibal would feel guilty about or ashamed of the last entry, nor would he ever apologize for it, but Will knows that this is an apology in its own right.

An amendment to the vulgarity of before. If Will was actually discomfited by the idea of Hannibal jacking off to a fantasy of Will sucking him down and fingering him, then Will would accept this apology.

But he's not. He wants it. Even if Hannibal wrote that entry as a taunt, a way to get the FBI agents to throw this book far away from them, Will knows there is truth to it.

Will just knows how highly Hannibal values politeness and condemns rudeness, is all. Which means even if he does have these fantasies, he would never write them down for himself.

The next paragraphs revert back to the same style and vulgarity of before.

*And once we have had our fill of caressing touches, I would take my fill of Will's cock in my mouth. Down on my knees between his legs, where he sits on the edge of our bed. His moans, loud and desperate, permeating the room around us. Fingers tangled in my hair, pulling me up and down on his cock.*

Will bites down on a knuckle to stop himself from whimpering. He's aching in his pants, so aroused by the words Hannibal put on the page. Will wonders if this was his goal. To not only make the FBI uncomfortable but to get Will achingly hard and desperate for his touch, as well.

He can imagine it so clearly. Those lips tight around him, eyes looking up through his greying bangs. He wonders if Hannibal would grow out his hair, dye it to the color it had been before he went to prison. That's what he pictures. The time before.

The idea of Hannibal taking him all the way into his mouth, letting Will hit the back of his throat with each bob of his head. Will would control the movements, with a hand tugging at Hannibal's hair, but not too harshly because he trusts Hannibal to know how to make him feel good without his guidance.

He moans at the thought, doesn't even try to force it down. Doesn't stop his hand from moving to palm himself through his jeans. He knows he shouldn't. But fuck, he's hard.

Will doesn't dare take his cock out, not while holding potential evidence, but he lets himself touch through his jeans. It only relieves some of the ache, and isn't nearly enough.

He squeezes his eyes shut, opens them again and looks back down at the open page.

*I would bring my hand up to Will's mouth, and he would open up for me, so obedient, so sweet, knowing I will make him feel so good in just a few minutes. He gets my fingers nice and slick with saliva as I do the same to his cock, until he's whining around my fingers, and pulling up on my hair, and I pull off with a pop.*

Will has to turn the page, having reached the bottom. It continues on the next one. He takes a glance at the page opposite in the journal and it's even more words. Will wonders how long this fantasy could possibly be, but he doesn't flip to the next page to check. He needs to go one at a time.

*Then I would pull my fingers out of his mouth and bring them down, trailing below his balls, to his perineum, pressing until he shifts his hips to give me better access. I would push two spit slicked fingers in, would hear would cry out at the suddenness.*

"Fuck," Will breathes. "You're killing me."

*It wouldn't take much to get Will ready for me at this point, always so eager and responsive, we do this often enough that both of us take little preparation anymore. Still, I take my time, kissing the insides of his thighs as I stretch him out with my two fingers.*

*Feeling Will clench around me when I find his prostate, hearing him say my name with so much desire. That would be too much for me. I would not be able to deny him any longer than that.*

*Will would scoot back on the bed as I stand. He would spread his legs for me as I retrieve lubricant from our nightstand drawer. He would reach out for it, wanting to slick up my cock himself, wanting to stroke me a few times after I gave him so much before. I would let him, then I would get between his legs and push slowly into his body.*

Unable to take it anymore, Will throws the book down on his coffee table and nearly breaks his zipper trying to get his pants open. He releases a sigh of relief when he finally pulls his cock out of his underwear and wraps his hand around it.

He tilts his head back against the couch and closes his eyes, letting his own fantasies take over as he works his cock in his hand.

He thinks of Hannibal on his knees in front of him, licking a line up his cock, leaving a trail of kisses along the shaft before taking him into his mouth.

A thought pops into his mind that has Will laughing as he strokes himself in his hand. He realizes how eager he is to get his dick into the mouth of a cannibal. One with teeth sharp enough and a bite strong enough to rip a man's throat out.

*So much for that fantasy,* Will tries to tell himself, but he finds himself even more aroused by the idea. Because there is something majorly wrong with him. Still, he redirects his thoughts.

He tightens his grip around himself, groaning as he does so. His pace quickens a bit and he bites back a moan as he tries to bring himself off.

His mind goes towards the last sentences that he read, he thinks of Hannibal pushing into him, stretching himself wide with his cock. If the drawing on the previous page is anywhere near accurate, Will knows he'd feel like he's about to break in two.

Hannibal over him, thrusting languidly into him, savoring their time together. He would lean down and kiss him, a slick slide of lips, a tangle of breaths. Will wonders if Hannibal would mark his skin with his lips and teeth, suck bruises into his neck, leave imprints of his canines in the flesh.

"Fuck," Will groans. He's getting close, moves his hand quicker, more frantic, his orgasm building up. He squeezes his eyes shut and arches his back against the couch, coming into his hand and on his shirt.

After a second of just sitting there, head back against the backrest, Will finally realizes what he's just done and winces. He tucks himself back into his underwear, zips up and buttons his jeans again and goes into the kitchen to wash his hand. He unbuttons his flannel and throws it into the washing machine.

He feels a bit of shame over having just gotten off to fantasies of Hannibal, to Hannibal's fantasies written two and a half years ago. Will doesn't even know if Hannibal still feels that way. Because he couldn't get more than four pages into the journal before needing to touch himself.

He buries his head in his hands, digs the heels of his hands into his eyes.

*No, you idiot,* he tells himself. *He wanted to kiss you on that cliff side. You felt every single thing he felt as you looked him in the eyes that night.*

It doesn't help ease the guilt that much, but Will has done worse things.

With that out of the way, Will decides he can read more of the journal without worrying about getting hard again for at least a little while.

He skims over the rest of the sex in that entry, not too interested for the moment, knowing it likely won't hold the answer to where Hannibal is anyway. He can't help but read the part right after.

*Sated and relaxed, I would pull Will close, have him lay on top of my body, pressing me into the mattress. He would kiss my collarbones, my neck. Would rest his head in the crook of my neck and I would wrap my arms around him, holding him close.*

*Never wanting to part, never again. Oh, how terribly I want to turn back time and do it all over again. I spent the entire day writing equation after equation, trying to get the math right while Will lay in bed, sleeping off the horrors of Muskrat Farm.*

*The math was not right. I could not get the math right and I can never get back what I have lost. At my own hand, no less.*

*I have no right to be saddened, when it is all things that I have done that lead me here. If only I could have loved him more openly and honestly, rather than try to tuck him away in prison when he got too close. I should have let him in, let him see me sooner, before everything else.*

*Now, all I have is the memory of something lacking, and my fabrications of a life that could have been and never was.*

And now Will is really crying as he finishes reading the page. Tears spilling hot down his face, throat closing, chest heaving. God, it hurts. It hurts so bad that they were so close.

Hannibal loves him, and missed him for all this time, and Will… did exactly as he promised and stayed away. And Will can't take that back. As much as he wishes he could. He can't.

And now Hannibal is gone, giving Will his wish of not knowing where he is. Three years late. But Will doesn't want it that way anymore. He wants to know where he is, needs to know where he is. Needs to look for him, needs to know what he's doing and where he's been. Hannibal has stolen a piece of him and Will is left with a void inside himself. He needs him back.

# Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After wiping his tears, Will turns the page to see another drawing. This one is on plain paper, rather than the lined notebook paper, and is taped in. Will is somewhat surprised Alana actually gave Hannibal tape. He wonders if she ever saw these depictions on paper before they got added into the book.

This one is of them in bed together, blankets pulled up to their chests, shoulders both bare. Hannibal lays behind Will, and arm around his waist over the blankets, chest pressed to Will's back. Will looks peaceful in this sleep, more peaceful than Will has likely ever actually slept. Hannibal's likeness is smiling into the back of Will's neck, his hair falling into his closed eyes. It's soft, tender, and so gentle. Loving.

Will traces his fingers over the lines of the drawing, over the sharp cheekbones on Hannibal's face, over the hand splayed on Will's abdomen. He turns the page to see another drawing taped in.

In this one, a side view of Will sitting on Hannibal, both bodies bare. Hannibal is laying flat on the sheets, head propped on a pillow, and it's clear Will is riding him. His mouth hangs open, his head thrown back slightly. Hannibal's hands grip Will's hips, and the grip looks like it would be hard enough to bruise. Hannibal's own face has a smile on it, eyes appear to be shut.

How Hannibal captures these images on paper so beautifully, and so accurately, Will has no idea.

The next page, another drawing taped in, this one of Will, waist up, laying flat on the sheets, an expression of pure ecstasy on his face. Will laughs at it, how narcissistic Hannibal is to think Will would react that way to being fucked by him. Still, the drawing is beautiful.

Will thinks for a moment, then flips back to the first one, the one of them spooning, and carefully peels the tape back. He pulls the drawing forward, and sure enough there's something written there. Coordinates.

"You are not fucking stupid enough to leave your coordinates in a journal," Will whispers out loud.

He pulls out his phone and types them into Google, one after another. All the locations of past Ripper displays. Including his copycat displays, and coordinates in Italy, Lithuania, and France, that Will assumes are other past kills.

He puts the drawing back, then peels the next one forward. Another entry, dated a few days after the last.

*It feels wrong to depict Will in this way without his permission. If he saw these drawings now, I wonder how he would feel about them. I am not usually worried about right or wrong. Most of the things I do in life are self indulgent and selfish, this is no different, but for some reason, these feel like a violation.*

*Not that I plan on stopping. If he were to see this journal, I fear he would be repulsed. We did not end on the best of terms, with him telling me he does not wish to think of me, nor know where I am.*

*Still that look he gave me in court flashes through my mind every time I think of him. It makes me hopeful.*

Will sighs and flattens the drawing back down, smoothing the tape onto the paper. He sets the book down on his coffee table and decides to call it a night. Too emotionally drained to keep going, too much of an ache in his chest to read any more of Hannibal's words.

*Hopeful,* Will thinks. So hopeful he left Will where he lay instead of taking him with.

It takes Will a few days before he's able to look at the book again. He goes to the BSHCI to look through more books. He goes into Quantico to relay his findings to Jack. Jack takes the books Will took notes from and says he'll read them himself, then see if they can come up with anything.

Jack promises to give him a call when he can, but there are other pressing matters for him to attend to. He asks Will where he thinks Hannibal would have gone.

Will answers truthfully. "I don't think he's even out of the country yet."

And Will has no idea why he feels that way, but he does. And for some reason Will thinks he's staying somewhere, a safe house, recovering. Maybe he'll come back for Will when he's healed. But Will doesn't think Hannibal is going to leave the country before then, not before he at least makes some form of contact with Will.

He doesn't say any of that to Jack.

When Will finally gets back to reading the journal, he has a moment of clarity during the next entry. Dated two weeks after the last one.

*To think of all the times I tried killing him. How he only ever attempted to harm me in retaliation for what I had done.*

*Will is surely more scarred than I. Both physically and mentally, I tore him apart. Were he to forgive me, truly forgive me, I would wonder why. Were he to ever come here to visit, to see me, I would easily see it as a manipulation.*

*I don't think it's possible for him to love me back. Feel the way I have felt for him since the day he walked into Jack Crawford's office.*

*If he did, it would be entirely a terrible idea. That is not to say I do not want it desperately.*

And that's when it hits Will that he is being utterly idiotic. He puts his head in his hands and lets out a laugh, feeling completely unhinged.

Hannibal has sliced him open, and has attempted to saw through his skull. Has left him to rot in prison for crimes Hannibal committed. And Will thinks he can love him? And *god,* Will really thinks he does, but that cannot be fucking right.

He aches for a touch he has seldom felt. One that has brought so much more pain than it has comfort. Seeks a man who broke every ounce of the huge amounts of trust Will has given him. Longs for someone who has left him on the ground, bleeding, on more than one occasion.

Hannibal knows he doesn't deserve Will's love, so Will asks himself why he even wants to give it. Why he wants to physically feel Hannibal's love and not just catch glimpses of it from sheets of paper.

Will wonders if reading these journal entries - most of which being extremely sexual in nature - are the reason for his feelings being so strong. The reason why he wants to fuck Hannibal so bad, then hold him afterwards like his life depends on it.

But he would not be sitting in his house in Wolf Trap, alone save the company of his two dogs, if that were the case. He would be with Molly, far away from the FBI's and Hannibal's grasps. Because he made the decision before he even had the journal in his hands, before he had any confirmation that Hannibal has truly thought of him in this way.

The journals help enable those feelings, though.

Most of his thoughts before had simply been how he misses Hannibal's company, misses the relationship they had before Will went to prison. Misses the relationship they attempted to build when Will was released.

In his hospital bed, he had thought of how he tracked Hannibal down to Europe, alone on his boat in the vast ocean. How he went to Hannibal's childhood home, got pushed from a train, and still went on to find him.

He wouldn't have done that back then if he was not pining in some way.

Things would have gone drastically different had Hannibal not tried to eat Will's brain. Had the *polizia* not stormed in and abducted them. Those few days were absolute hell and Will didn't know what else to do besides reject Hannibal.

He was so tired. And he was so sick of Mason fucking Verger causing even more problems. All the time. There's still blood stained on the floor from when he tore his face to shreds in Will's living room. And he projected all of that onto Hannibal.

Perhaps that abduction saved his life, but fuck, if Will would have died... that would have made things a lot easier. Just like how Will intended to pull him and Hannibal off that cliff a few weeks ago.

Will finds that death always seems like the easiest way out wherever Hannibal is involved. Could that *possibly* be love? Or even sustainable?

So Will thought of the ache, the longing, the pining, even thought of death by Hannibal's side or hand. But he rarely thought of a real life by Hannibal's side.

He really laid in his hospital bed thinking that he loves Hannibal, but never considered what he would do if they were ever reunited. Because honestly, he really never considered it being possible to get that far.

Now, after reading only a handful of Hannibal's journal entries, Will has put more and more thought into it. He realizes that he's a horny bastard, for one. And for two, he realizes he wants to share a home, a bed, a few dogs, a *life* with Hannibal.

And it is fucking unsettling.

Now Will has a headache. Either from thinking too hard or the concussion he's still recovering from, he doesn't know. Likely both.

He hates taking the pain killers he was prescribed, but he takes one anyway, washes it down with a glass of water. Then he climbs into bed, pulls the covers over his head, and shuts his eyes.

His head hurts too bad to actually fall asleep, but he's tired.

The tiredness hits him at weird times these days. He's recovering from two stab wounds and two blows to the head. His entire body has been aching at odd times. It's been almost three weeks, but it's still all painful.

After a while he manages to fall asleep, and he only knows because he jolts awake to the sound of his phone ringing on his nightstand.

A blocked number. He answers it.

"Hello?" Will asks.

"Will," the unmistakable voice says. It's not a question. A confident greeting.

"Fuck," Will groans. He can't believe the man is being this stupid. "My phone is likely tapped, you know that right?"

"A risk I am willing to take," Hannibal says. "Do be sure to tell Jack I called, of course."

"I, uh, what? Hannibal, why are you calling me?"

"To hear your voice. I was curious about how you were recovering. I admit it has been on my mind since I left you," Hannibal tells him.

"I'm fine," Will mumbles.

There's so much he wants to say, so much he wants to ask. The FBI likely have all of his calls being recorded, they likely made sure of that when they looked through his phone for clues. He can't very easily say, 'I love you,' or, 'I need you,' to Hannibal right now. He knows Hannibal won't answer if he asks where he is.

"I am glad to hear it," Hannibal says. Will can hear a smile in his voice.

"How are you doing?" Will asks.

"I'm well. Recovering nicely. Thank you for asking."

Will sighs. "Yeah. Can they track this call?"

"I expect them to try," Hannibal answers. "It was good hearing from you, Will."

"Hannibal, I-" Will starts. "We're going to find you."

"I am counting on it," Hannibal says. If he's not winking, he would be if Will were in front of him. Will can see the visual in his mind clear as day when Hannibal says the words.

Before Will can say another word, the call ends. Knowing that Hannibal would not have encouraged Will to tell Jack if he did not mean it, Will knows there has to be a reason for that request. What the reason is, he is not completely sure.

He calls Jack right away.

"Will, how are you?" Jack answers.

"He just called me."

"Lecter?" Jack asks.

"Yes. Is my phone tapped? Can someone at the Bureau listen to that call, or track him with it?"

There's a pause. Then, "We'll see what we can do. Tell me what he said."

So Will does. The entire conversation.

"He called to see how you're doing," Jack states.

"It would seem. I think he wants to be caught."

"Then why doesn't he just surrender again?"

*Because that's not the type of 'caught' he wants to be,* Will thinks. No, Hannibal wants Will to catch him, to be the one to reel him in and do as he pleases. Will knows it's his call. It has always been his call.

"Because it's a game to him," Will says instead. "He's been bored, Jack."

“And that worries me.”

“Me too. The Vergers are all under protection, right? How about Bedelia, or, I don't know... everyone? God, he knew a lot of people.,” Will sighs.

“Alana is safe with her family, yes,” Jack answers. “We cannot very easily put every person he has ever known under protection. Doctor Du Maurier refused our help. She claims Lecter will not come for her without you by his side. ”

“Well, I suppose it is a good thing I don’t plan on joining him.”

“Do you think he’ll come for you, Will? He called you. He’ll probably know you’re in Wolf Trap,” Jack says. “Should we put you under protection?”

Will laughs, just once, completely humorless. “He may be an idiot, but he’s not that stupid. He won’t come here.”

But Will desperately hopes he does. Will hopes Hannibal comes and whisks him away. Without Will having to do any more work to track him down.

“Right, well. I’ll see about tracing that call. Stay safe, Will.,” Jack says.

“You too,” Will responds, then hangs up.

Will goes out the next morning and buys a burner phone. For the off chance that Hannibal calls again. He’ll find a way to give him the number. Some sort of code. Will doesn’t know. But he needs to talk to him again. Tell him how he feels.

He doesn’t expect to see an envelope in his mailbox with no postage stamp or return address when he returns home from the store. Hand delivered, it seems. Will’s name is written in that fancy script. Will’s hands shake the entire way up his drive and to his house.

Hannibal is much, much closer than expected. Risked being caught just to put a letter in Will’s mail box. Will gets out of his car, holding the letter in his hand, then goes to his trunk to get the groceries he bought along with the new phone.

Inside, Will feeds the dogs, lets them outside, then starts putting his groceries away, the letter sitting on the kitchen table for now.

He keeps glancing at it while he makes himself lunch. He opens a can of soda and sits down at the kitchen table with his plate. He stares at the envelope while he eats his sandwich, and eats his chips, and still as he finishes his soda.

When the plate is washed and put away, and the can is in the recycling, and the dogs are content and lounging in their beds, Will knows he can’t avoid it any longer. He slides his thumb under the opening and carefully opens it.

*Will,*

*This is entirely unwise of me to do, I am fully aware. I hope you can understand why I cannot tell you where I am, or why we cannot see each other yet.*

*I sincerely hope you do not turn this letter over to the FBI, but if you do, I would understand. I am leaving a phone number. If you call me with it, I will immediately ditch the phone and flee from my location after the call, but that does not mean I do not want to hear from you. I will not call your cell phone again. I hope you will do me the courtesy of getting a phone that Jack Crawford cannot listen in on.*

*We walk a fragile line between friend and enemy. I am unsure if I can fully trust you, and I am certain you aren't sure if you can trust me. There are things left unspoken between us, that I would want to be spoken, but only between us. In time, my dear Will. If you should wish it.*

*I am going to be long gone by the time you read this, of that I am certain. The FBI will not find me based on any of this information alone, and neither will you. I have full faith in your abilities when the time is right. You found me before, when I had wanted to be found.*

*I hope that you want to find me. I had wanted you to visit me for years, but when you did it was for the FBI. It needs to be for you. For me. Us.*

*HL*

Will sets the letter down on his table and takes a deep breath. Part of him wants to pick up the new cell phone right now and call the number Hannibal left, but the other part of himself won't do it.

The time isn't right.

Of course, he is not going to tell Jack about this either. There is no possible way he could. And he knows that if he does, Hannibal will know. It would be a form of rejection. Jack can have some things, but not everything.

That's when it hits Will *why* Hannibal encouraged Will to tell him about the phone call. So Jack thinks Will is on his side and willing to give up real information on Hannibal. Except it's not real information, not that phone call. A friendly conversation between old acquaintances, at best. Whereas this letter is a test, but also some sort of declaration.

A promise.

Maybe the journal Will stole doesn't actually hold the answer. Maybe Hannibal is going to come to him. Maybe Will just needs to wait and see what happens.

Hannibal is not even aware of Will's knowledge of his feelings. Unless Bedelia went to the BSHCI and told him, but that does not seem likely. So Hannibal is guessing. Hoping. So much hope, so much faith in Will. A man who has rejected Hannibal more than once.

Yet here he is, writing to Will, risking his life to drop the letter in Will's mailbox personally. He doesn't even know how Will feels.

At that thought, Will has to laugh.

Molly knew all along how Will felt about Hannibal. There is likely no doubt in Hannibal's mind that Will at least feels something towards him. That night on the cliff was… intimate. Will would not have said what he said, nor would he have placed his head on Hannibal's chest and clung to him, if he hadn't felt something. Hannibal must have clocked him. Likely even sooner than that.

"He fucking knows," Will mutters out loud to himself. "He just needs proof."

And Will is going to give him proof. He just has to figure out how he can prove himself. It will not be an easy feat, that is for sure. But it will happen.

If the journal does not hold the answer to where Hannibal is, maybe it will hold the answer to what Hannibal needs from him. So Will takes the letter, buries it deep down inside of his underwear drawer, then sits down on the couch. He picks up the journal from where it has been sitting on the coffee table and he opens it up to the next page.

Chapter End Notes

Wooo so Hannibal has sort of? Shown up. More to come in a few days.

# Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

*One day, I will likely break out of this box. Of that, I have no doubt. I believe the first thing I will do is go to Will. Ask him if he will ever consider forgiving me.*

*It is very likely Will would ask to never see me again, it is also likely he would call the police to come pick me up. I wonder if I would return to my cell, or if I would kill them all when they show up.*

*By that time, I am sure he will be married to his fiancee, and I am sure he will not leave her for me, but a man can dream. And dream I do.*

The entry goes into an extremely pornographic description of them fucking over Hannibal's dining table, with an accompanying drawing of the act. His Baltimore home, of course. The next page is a drawing of Will, back pressed to the ladder in Hannibal's old office, one knee is hiked up around Hannibal's hip, as Hannibal presses his cock into Will's ass. Hannibal's face is buried into Will's neck in this drawing.

Before Will can study it too hard, he slams the book down on the coffee table again and does not look at it again for the rest of the night.

There is not a lot that can be done involving finding Hannibal. Jack has Will coming out to crime scenes as a consultant, just to pass time while they wait for something to happen. Will does his thing, goes into the minds of killers to help take them down. He is even allowed to do guest lectures at the Academy. It helps pay the bills, even though he is technically supposed to be retired.

He knows he needs to stay on the FBI's good side for as long as possible. Especially when he has a letter from a serial killer stashed in his underwear drawer, and a burner phone in his glove box with said serial killer's phone number programmed into it.

The phone comes inside with him every night when he gets home from Quantico, and goes back into the car each morning. He doesn't know why he feels the need to keep it close. It's not as if he can actually press dial on the contact.

And it is not that he does not want to. He really wants to call Hannibal. Tell him he has been reading the journal - the first few pages, at least - and wants him, too.

He just can't.

The journal even sits neglected on his coffee table for a week following the receiving of the letter. He just sits, eyes drifting towards it while he watches TV every night.

Jack calls one night, just as Will is settling down on the couch with the dogs, a glass of whiskey in one hand, the remote in the other. This is the night Will knows he can't wait any longer.

"Will. How soon can you get to the airport?" Jack asks, no time for a greeting.

"I've been drinking," Will tells him. It's not entirely true, he's barely taken a sip, but *god* he just sat down and does not want to get on a plane.

"Then I'll come get you. Pack a bag," Jack says. "I'll be there in twenty. It's him, Will."

"Who?" Will asks, standing up to get a backpack out of his closet.

"Hannibal. Texas. They're waiting for us. We think he might try and cross the border, so they're shutting it down. We need you to look at the body," Jack tells him.

Will's heart sinks in his chest. Hannibal should not be so stupid to start killing again so soon. Not while he is likely still recovering from his gunshot wound, and everything else Dolarhyde may have done to him. Not while everyone in America has seen his photo, and every FBI agent is aware of his crimes.

"Okay. I'll be ready," Will says.

He immediately hangs up and goes to the drawer he keeps the other phone in. Doesn't even think before hitting the call button.

Several rings go by before it is picked up and Will thinks it may go unanswered. He's frantically throwing clothes into his bag while it rings.

"Hello?" Hannibal answers. God Will wants to cry hearing that familiar voice.

"I'm on my way to Texas as soon as Jack gets to my house. Are you stupid, Hannibal? Killing this soon after escaping, alerting all of the authorities, *getting the border shut down* !" Will yells. "You were shot in the abdomen, and god knows what else and you're out killing now. Why?"

"I'm no longer in the area, Will," Hannibal says. "Quite far already, actually."

"Where are you, then? They're going to be looking for you," Will cries out, voice distressed and anguished, and so worried. Quieter now, he says, "You can't be in any shape to be doing this."

"Why do you care? You told me you do not wish to know where I am or what I am doing. Why now? You were going to let me go all those years ago." Hannibal's tone is cold, words short.

"Well, fuck you. I don't want that anymore," Will admits. "I didn't give up your letter, I didn't give up your number. What else do you need from me?"

“The time is not right, Will,” Hannibal sighs. Just like that, his voice is warm and Will wants to live inside the sound. “I need to be able to trust you.”

“You can, Hannibal. You can trust me. Why not take me with you that night?” Will asks, voice quiet. “I- I wanted to run away with you. I still do. More than anything.”

“Will,” Hannibal whispers.

“Bedelia said you’re in love with me,” Will says.

The line is quiet on the other end and Will has to laugh.

“Fine, you don’t have to say it. Just wanted you to know that I know. And it makes no sense why you would leave me again,” Will says. “After everything, after killing together, after I helped plan your escape with Dolarhyde, how can you just… Leave?”

“You helped?” Hannibal asks.

“He was in my hotel room one night. I told him the plan,” Will whispers. “I… how can I prove myself, Hannibal?”

“You have to answer that for yourself, Will.”

“I don’t *want* to. I just want you to tell me, so we can… fuck, I don’t know!” Will exclaims. “I want you. I want you to come back, and then take me away with you.”

“I don’t know if I can believe that, Will. You have lied to me in the past.”

“I’m not lying this time,” Will says. “I’ll tell you right now everything I have told Jack. I will tell you who is and is not under protection, I’ll tell you where they think you are and where they think you are going to be.”

“Will,” Hannibal sighs.

“I left my wife, I left most of my dogs, I’ve been stealing and hiding evidence. I don’t know what else to do,” Will says. He’s nearly crying now. “Hannibal, at the very least don’t get rid of this phone. I need to be able to call you again.”

“I will call you with the new one I get,” Hannibal whispers.

“What? Is that how it’s going to work? You call me, ditch the phone, then I have to wait to talk to you again until *you're* ready? Fuck you, Hannibal,” Will says. Will looks out the window and sees headlights pulling up. “I have to go.”

“Of course,” Hannibal says. “I would not want to keep you. Do tell Jack you believe I am still in El Paso. They will find a stolen car with my prints near the border.”

“Where are you actually?” Will asks, knowing he won’t answer. “Did you cross over?”

“No. I am still in the States,” Hannibal says.

Will sighs and sees Jack getting out of his car to walk up to the house. He turns to throw his phone charger into his bag and puts his regular phone in his pocket.

“I really have to go. I,” Will pauses, wonders if he should say it. He decides not to, goes for something else instead. “Do what you need with your phone. Call me in a week.”

“I will. Take care of yourself, Will,” Hannibal says. And he hangs up.

Will thinks about what he almost said as he shuts off the cell and puts it back into the drawer. Jack knocks on his front door and Will opens it.

“Can you give me like five more minutes?” Will asks.

Jack nods and turns back to his car. Will looks down at the dogs.

“Fuck. You guys need a sitter, don’t you?” Will sighs. He rubs at his face in exhaustion.

Instead, he just dumps them enough food to last a few days. They’ve free fed in the past, so he isn’t too worried about just the two of them. It’s not ideal, but Alana is in hiding, and Molly lives several hours away. He doesn’t know if his neighbor still lives in the same house. He props the back door open so they can come and go.

Winston and Buster are well behaved and older, they won’t run away.

Will leans down and kisses both of their heads.

“I love you guys,” he whispers. He thinks about what he wanted to say on the phone, then says that too.

“I love you, Hannibal,” he whispers. A secret just for him and the dogs to know. He wonders if Hannibal would come back for him if Will says it. He’ll just have to find out.

Will takes his backpack out to Jack’s car and gets into the passenger seat. He takes a shaky breath as he settles into the seat and buckles his seatbelt.

“You okay?” Jack asks.

No. “Yeah, I’m good.”

“We’re gonna catch him, Will,” Jack says as he starts driving.

Will just nods and stares out the window the entire ride to the airport.

He can’t believe how short Hannibal was with him, how silent he stayed. His letter said he wanted to talk about everything, but this phone call proves otherwise, in Will’s opinion.

Will has no idea what to do.

“So how do we know it’s him?” Will asks once they’re through security and sitting at the gate. Zeller and Price are on their way. It’ll be like old times again.

“Left a note,” Jack says. “It’s not a typical Ripper killing, but the note is definitely his handwriting.”

“How is it not typical?”

“Not displayed in any special way. Found in a bathtub in a hotel room. Kind of like that one a few years ago that Z insisted was him, but *wasn’t* him,” Jack answers. “You remember that case?”

“Organ harvester. Devon Silvestri,” Will says with a nod. “Hannibal helped with that case. Saved that victim in the back of the ambulance when we caught Silvestri.”

“Exactly. Which is why we think he might kill more people in the same ways of other cases he helped on.”

“You think so? I mean is it really that similar? Anyone can take an organ and dump a guy in a hotel bathtub,” Will points out.

“That is why we need you,” Jack sighs. “It’s not ideal, they’ve likely picked through the scene already, and the body is already four days old, but it’s the best we can do,” Jack sighs.

“And are people searching the area for him?” Will asks. God he really hopes Hannibal is out of the state by now.

“Yes. Border is pretty locked down right now. They’re checking all the other hotel rooms, all back roads out of the city are blocked off. We have police on all the highways running plates and watching,” Jack explains. “We’ll get him.”

“Let’s hope so,” Will responds.

Zeller and Price arrive a few minutes later and Will has to tune them out in order to not lose his shit. He knows they’re talking about Hannibal, but cannot listen to a single word of what they say. He wants to go back home, call Hannibal’s phone again just to see if he really ditched it, or if he trusts Will not to try and track it.

He wants to beg him to come for him, wants to say he’ll do anything. But instead he has to sit with Jack Crawford on one side of him and Jimmy and Brian on the other side while they wait for the plane to board.

When the plane does board, it’s not any better. He got stuck in the middle seat between Jimmy and Brian. An hour into the flight, an hour into them leaning over him to talk to each other, he finally snaps.

“Either switch seats with me, or shut the fuck up,” Will hisses.

They both murmur a ‘sorry’ and settle back into their seats. They don’t speak again for the duration of the flight.

They get to the hotel where the body is and, sure enough, it’s very similar to the Devon Silvestri case. The hotel has similar design and colors, the body is propped up in the bathtub

the same way. The only difference is several organs removed, and the body stitched up a lot cleaner.

Will looks at the note. Hannibal's handwriting, that he knows very intimately at this point. Just a single sentence on the paper, blood splattered around the words.

*Been a long time since I used a scalpel on anything but a pencil.*

Hannibal said it to Will years ago. Back when Will wouldn't stay for his dinner party, after asking what became of Devon Silvestri's donor. Will had told him he had a date with the Chesapeake Ripper. If only he had stayed that night so that it may have been the truth.

It has to be a message to Will. It was a private conversation between the two of them in Hannibal's kitchen.

It's another one of his risky letters.

Of fucking course it is. And it's so clearly Hannibal's work, so precise and perfect. Even without a proper display, Will knows that this still has artistic motivation behind it. And he knows it's a taunt to the FBI. And he knows Hannibal is addressing him directly. And Will can't go inside Hannibal's head. He can't.

Will shakes his head and takes a few steps away from the body.

"Will?" Jack asks.

"I can't do this," Will says. "I can't be here. I can't do this."

"Will we need you," Jack insists.

"I'm not going inside his head. I'm not getting close to this," Will insists. "I'll tell you what I think, otherwise. Let's start with some obvious things that anyone can figure out."

Jack looks at him expectantly.

"I watched him get shot in the abdomen, just a few weeks ago. I watched him lose tons of blood helping me take down Dolarhyde," Will says. "No proper medical attention, I am assuming. Been on his own. If he's smart, which we know he is, he would not have left El Paso. He's probably laying low somewhere nearby."

"Why do you say that?"

"Hasn't killed in years, not on top of his game, definitely not strong or healthy. Fleeing the area would take too much out of him at this point. He's waiting until the search is directed elsewhere. He probably left a trail out of the city to point us in a different direction," Will says. And he really hopes this doesn't jeopardize anything. "But I think he's close."

"You *think* he's close, or you *want* him to be close?"

And Will knows this is where his acting skills need to come in, where he needs to take on the mindset of someone scared for this life. He snaps, “Why the fuck would I want him anywhere near me, Jack? I want him thrown back in fucking prison and I want this to be over.”

“Go take five, Will,” is all Jack says.

Will leaves the hotel room, goes down to the lobby and outside. He sits down on a bench by the doors and puts his head down in his hands.

He stays out there for much longer than five minutes, and eventually he hears footsteps on the pavement, and someone is sitting down next to him on the bench.

“I can’t pretend to know exactly what you’re going through, but if you need to talk, we can talk,” Jack says.

“I’m fine, Jack. It’s just a lot. I want him caught, but I don’t want to be inside his head,” Will says. He sits up straight, sets his hands on his knees.

“I think I’m going to take you off the case,” Jack says.

That’s not what Will wants, not at all. He still needs access to files, evidence, *something.* But he can’t say any of that. He sure as fuck does not want to be dragged all across America, several steps behind Hannibal at every moment. They will never catch up to him this way.

“I can still help,” Will offers.

“You can help from home,” Jack says. “You’ll get everything you need, but his crime scenes aren’t good for you, are they?”

“No. They’re not,” Will agrees.

“We’re packing up. Getting the body shipped to Quantico. We have an ID, by the way.”

“Anyone of interest?”

“The man Lecter saved in the back of that ambulance five years ago,” Jack says quietly.

“Well, shit.”

“Shit is right,” Jack agrees.

“The note,” Will says. It really can’t hurt to tell him, Will decides. “It was something he said to me. When I told him he saved the guy’s life.”

“Why would he save this life, just to take it later?” Jack asks.

Will shrugs. “Maybe the guy never said thanks.”

“You think we might see more killings linked like this?”

“It’s possible,” Will says. “It’s also possible he’s not going to kill again for a while. Or that he’s going through everyone he remembers from his Rolodex.”

“I’ll see about getting that from evidence. I’ll have someone give everyone a call and tell them to be careful.”

“Fuck. Imagine getting a call from the FBI saying you were under consideration for an invitation to Hannibal the Cannibal’s dinner table,” Will laughs. It really should not be funny, but it is. “That’s gonna make some people reevaluate their choices.”

“Sometimes I feel like I should just… let him go,” Jack admits. “I’ve been searching for the Chesapeake Ripper for years and he just keeps getting out from under me. Even when we had him, that was his choice.”

“More trouble than he’s worth,” Will murmurs.

“Yeah.” Jack agrees.

It’s another two days before they can actually go home. The local police find the car Hannibal dumped by the border and Will tells Jack he is fine to look at it.

“Do you still think he’s staying in El Paso?” Jack asks.

Will nods. “This is just something to throw us off his trail. He wouldn’t leave prints in his real car.”

“But he knows we know it’s him already. Surely he won’t be so particular about evidence.”

Will shrugs. He doesn’t really even want to try coming up with an answer to this. Because he knows the truth, and he can’t tell Jack anything.

Finally, when there’s nothing else they can do, they’re on a plane back to Virginia. Will got sat next to Jack this time, thankfully. And Jack doesn’t push him to talk, nor does he talk much himself. It’s far better than sitting between Zeller and Price.

Jack drives him home, and Will thanks him.

Inside his house, the dogs seem content and fine. They’re beyond happy to see him. Will takes a look around the living room, and nothing seems out of place. But then he notices the journal is open on the coffee table. He didn’t leave it open.

Ignoring that, for the moment, Will goes into the kitchen and sees there’s no dog food left. Which is to be expected, but not the cleanliness left behind at the bowls. No stray kibbles anywhere. The back door is closed, too.

Which means someone has been inside his house. On the kitchen counter is an envelope and Will wants to scream. His name written carefully on the front in the familiar flowing script. Will is overcome with rage that Hannibal came to his house. Took care of the dogs. Left a note, and god knows what else. Knows that Will has the journal.

His stomach drops to his feet at that thought. He takes the envelope and sits at the kitchen table.

Carefully, he opens the envelope and pulls out two pieces of paper.

A phone number printed carefully on one of them. Just a small piece of paper, the size of a business card. Will hopes the new number is Hannibal's and not someone else's.

The next piece is a letter. Neatly written in Hannibal's handwriting.

*Dear Will,*

*I hope you do not mind me taking care of your furry friends while you were gone. Afterall, it is entirely my fault you had to leave home on such short notice. I closed your back door, and I cleaned up their mess. I hope you are on your way home by the time I have written this, but should the investigation keep you, I can assure you I am not too far that I cannot check in on them again. If you do come home before that happens, do not try to look for me. You won't find me.*

*I have noticed you have my journal from prison. I am unsure how much of it you have read, but I must remind you of my very strong nose. I hope you enjoyed what you read, though I have a feeling you did thoroughly. I have left it open to a particularly pleasant page.*

*I left another phone number, even though I promised to call within a week. I know you were upset with me and we did not have long to talk, so I hope we can attempt to clear the air in our next call.*

*I have also left you a meal. Heat it in the oven. I sincerely hope you enjoy it.*

*Regards,*

*Hannibal Lecter*

*PS If you would like to plan more according to my schedule, I will likely take my next victim three weeks from the day you went to Texas. I will not tell you who or where, but I hope that is enough time for you to find a dog sitter.*

Will feels completely and utterly mortified over the fact that Hannibal knows about the journal, knows he has read some of it, and knows what he did while reading it. He puts his head down on the kitchen table and groans.

"How is this my life?" Will asks Winston, now sitting at his feet.

Winston just paws at his knee in response, and Will ruffles his ears.

When the initial mortification passes, Will wonders what would happen if Will *didn't* find a dog sitter. Would Hannibal come back and check? He probably would. *He's too polite not to,* Will thinks. And at that, Will starts to formulate a plan.

But first. The journal on the coffee table.

Chapter End Notes

Please leave comments!! Another chapter in a few days as long as I have enough people still interested in this story

# Chapter 5

"What the fuck?" Will asks out loud, picking up the journal to see what's on the page. He had been expecting to see something sexual, something completely arousing like the other entries he had read or drawings he had seen. Had expected to see something that related to Hanniball smelling the journal. Not… this.

*I know how Will feels about Bedelia. I wonder if Will feels enough resentment towards her to take her life? He has killed before, and I am certain he will kill again.*

*An acquaintance, though? That is the question. Someone who I have known for years, who took his place in Florence, who I have shared my bed with. Would it be too personal?*

*Perhaps not her life, but something else. I hope Will would take something from her should he ever get the chance. He deserves that much. To take from her just as she has taken from him.*

Will finishes reading it and realizes Hannibal needs him to kill again. Needs him to kill, and that's the only way he can prove that he is trustworthy.

He remembers his last conversation with Bedelia, telling her meat's back on the menu. But he can't do that without Hannibal. He won't kill her without Hannibal there to see him do it. Just like Bedelia knows Hannibal won't show up without Will by his side.

This journal entry was written only a few months ago, it's toward the end of the journal, but Will realizes the year is wrong. The previous and next page have a different year than this entry. This one is dated into the future.

"No fucking way," Will murmurs.

He dials the number Hannibal left for him.

"Hello?" Hannibal answers.

"You want me to kill Bedelia to prove myself to you?" Will asks angrily. "Really? As if I haven't done enough?"

"And if I do want you to?" Hannibal asks. "You know, Will, I would have expected a 'thank you' for feeding Buster and Winston while you were gone."

"Fuck you," Will says. "Is the date in the journal the day I'm supposed to do it?"

"If it is? Would you?"

"Enough with this shit, Hannibal. Give a straight answer for once in your goddamn life."

"Then yes," Hannibal answers. "I think it would be rather cathartic for you to take something from Doctor Du Maurier, whether that be her life or something else. And that is up to you

when you do it, but that date is when I plan to have dinner with her next. You would have help on that day."

"And what, I'm just supposed to wait to see you until then?" Will asks. "I mean, seriously, you wanted me for *years* and now you're making yourself wait even longer? You're still near my house, aren't you?"

"No. I left the area when I saw you return home."

"You were still on my property?" Will asks in disbelief. "What if Jack would have seen you?"

"He didn't."

"Well, either way, why can't you just turn your car around and come back? Why deny yourself longer when I am ready and willing to come with you?" Will asks. "It doesn't make any sense, Hannibal."

"It will," Hannibal says. "I need to be certain, Will."

Will groans. "I finally want to see you and you don't want to see me."

"Well, at least you know how it feels now," Hannibal says.

"Hannibal," Will sighs. "I'm…"

"Don't apologize," Hannibal says, a strong edge to his words. "You are not sorry, so do not pretend you are. You're sorry for yourself, not sorry to me."

"How would you know?" Will snaps.

"Because I know you," Hannibal shoots back. "I know that you do not actually know what you want, and I know that you think you do because of that journal you found in my cell. What you don't know is that I wrote those entries so the orderlies would stay out of my belongings. My feelings for you go beyond what has been written in those pages, beyond sexual desire. Do you understand, Will?"

"Yes," Will says slowly. Trying to swallow down his rising anger, his rising outburst that he knows will just cause more problems.

"So you see, how I find myself guarded around you. When your feelings and desperation have only come out to me after you masturbated reading that journal," Hannibal says. As an afterthought, it seems, he says, "Desperate is not a good look on you, Will."

His sharp tone and his biting words cause Will to wince. He's not mortified like he had been reading the letter, no, now he's angry, he's feeling so much disbelief he's at a loss for words. He can't believe Hannibal is saying these things. But then again, he can.

"Fuck you," Will says again.

“Yes, yes, I know. You are so very angry with me for getting under your skin. Would you like to defend yourself, Will? Tell me how wrong you believe I am, when you and I both know how right I am.”

“Are you *trying* to push me away?” Will asks. It is all clicking into place. “That’s it, isn’t it? You’re pushing me away before you can get too attached again, before I can reject you again. I’m right, aren’t I? You know I want you, sexually and in any other capacity you’ll have me, but you think I will still get bored and leave again, don’t you?”

“I think this conversation is over,” Hannibal answers. “Call me again when you have your head on straight.”

“Oh real nice, you fucking coward,” Will scoffs. He hangs up before Hannibal can.

He sits back against the couch and starts laughing. Unhinged, uncontrollable laughter, which soon turns into sobs and tears. The transition goes unnoticed by him, but after a while he’s curled up on his side, breathing heavily, trying to make himself stop.

*“Desperate is not a good look on you, Will.”*

The words ring through his head over and over. He has to ask himself if it’s really all worth it, to try and win back the love of a serial killer. A killer who was once his best friend, but now says things that he knows will hurt.

But he didn’t leave his wife or his comfortable life for nothing. There’s no fucking way he’s going to let Hannibal slip through his fingers again.

With a sigh, he calls back. He has to.

“Yes, Will?” Hannibal answers.

“I don’t care if desperate is a bad look on me, Hannibal. I need you to hear what I have to say,” Will says. His voice is raw from crying, he sniffles a bit, and he hopes Hannibal doesn’t realize that. “Are you listening?”

“Yes.”

“I chose you long before finding that journal. You have to know that. I chose you the day I came back, Hannibal,” Will whispers. “I tried to fight it, but I can never fight you off. I left my wife while I was still in the hospital. I lied to Jack Crawford about that night. I’ve been lying to him since. You were my first thought when I woke up on that cliff edge. You can’t believe that I don’t want you.”

“Be that as it may, I still need some time, Will.”

“Eight fucking months? I don’t think I can do that, Hannibal,” Will says.

“I did it for three years,” Hannibal says.

Will doesn't know what to say to that. Of fucking course Hannibal is seeing all of this as payback, is making this into a fucking test that Will needs to pass. Of course he is.

He just lets out a shaky breath, swallows, then says, "Okay. Okay, you're right. I'll see you at Bedelia's, then."

But Will knows he'll be seeing him much, much sooner than that.

Over the course of the next three weeks, Will bides his time, waiting for a call about a body. Hannibal calls a week later, as promised.

Their conversation is short, just questions about how the other is recovering, a few questions from Hannibal about Jack, but nothing about their relationship, or lack thereof. Will is relieved that Hannibal calls from the same phone they last spoke on. Apparently his trust for Will is expanding. It might break again after what Will has planned, though.

Will works on cases close to home, only on ones he doesn't have to leave for the night. He teaches a few lectures. He does one on surviving Hannibal, but he knows he has not truly done that yet. He doesn't know if he'll survive their separation.

Also during this time, Will sets up a security camera in his house, one that gets the video sent to his phone.

Hannibal doesn't call again before the body turns up. Jack calls to tell him about it, but they both agree Will won't be coming with them on this one. Closer than El Paso, this time. New Orleans, Louisiana. Will would have loved to go back to Louisiana, see some old friends from the force who would no doubt be helping on the case.

That has to be why Hannibal chose that location, knowing Will wouldn't turn down a trip down there. But that makes Hannibal wrong.

Setting the plan in motion, Will calls Hannibal, a frantic edge to his voice while he pretends to pack things. If Hannibal is watching his house, he needs to make this as realistic as possible.

"Jack just called," Will says quickly, throwing a few shirts into his backpack.

"I take it my gift has been found," Hannibal says.

"Yeah. Seriously? New Orleans? Did you do that on purpose?" Will asks, faking anger.

He shoves a phone charger into his bag, dumps a bunch of dog kibble on the floor, props the back door open, as they talk.

"Yes, perhaps I did. It'll be good for you to see old friends, don't you think?" Hannibal asks.

"I guess so," Will sighs.

"Tell me, did you get a dog sitter?" Hannibal asks.

“No. It would’ve been weird having to explain to someone how I knew I’d be leaving town on a case before a body even showed up,” Will mutters. “Surely that’s obvious.”

“Hm, I suppose you’re right.”

“You’re not in NOLA anymore, right?” Will asks, patting the dogs on their heads, then heading out to his car. If Hannibal sees him drive away, then he’ll likely let himself in right after Will leaves.

“No, quite far,” Hannibal answers.

“What should I say?” Will asks, putting his car in drive and driving out to the main road.

“What did you tell them last time?”

“That you got shot through the abdomen and there’s no way you’re doing a lot of moving without rest, and that you were laying low in El Paso,” Will says.

“Tell them something similar, then. I am putting it in your hands,” Hannibal says. “Are you on the way to the airport?”

“Yeah, just left my house. I should hang up. Can I call you again tonight if I find some time?” Will asks.

“If you would like. For now, I will let you go.”

Will hangs up and laughs to himself. The three week mark was two days ago. Hannibal could easily be back in Virginia by now, just waiting until Will leaves. Hiding in the woods, probably.

He drives a safe distance away, finds a Park and Ride where he can leave his car for a few days, then checks into a nearby hotel. He waits, waiting for his phone to alert him to movement on the camera. He figures he may not have much time to get back home, not knowing how long Hannibal will actually stay in his house, but he hopes his plan works out.

“Bingo,” he says as his phone chimes around eleven pm. He checks the video feed, sees Hannibal come in through the back door just as Will assumed he would. His hair is longer, his facial hair has grown out a bit. He’s dressed down, just jeans and a t-shirt, with a jacket over it. He has a backpack over one shoulder, and he pulls a baggy out of his pocket and starts dropping treats on the ground for the dogs.

Will immediately calls a cab, and is on his way home within the next ten minutes.

Another ten minutes, and he’s on the main road by his house, quickly paying the driver, and getting out.

“You sure you wanna be dropped off here? I can take you up to the house,” the driver offers.

“No, this is good. Thank you,” Will says, and starts walking through the woods on the edge of the road, up toward his property. When he gets to the edge, the lights in the house are still

on and he can feel himself shaking.

How is Hannibal going to react? Is he going to think Will is the police? Will has to admit he never thought his plan would work this smoothly, didn't think Hannibal would actually be there when Will got back.

He walks carefully up to his house, can see Hannibal through the kitchen window, sitting at the table.

Will lets himself into the house, quiet as possible, but Hannibal still comes running into the living room, a knife in his hand. Will drops his backpack onto the floor just as Hannibal lets the knife fall.

"Don't run," Will says. "Please."

Hannibal just stands there, mouth hanging open, and Will can't be apart from him for another second. He closes the distance between them, grabs onto the fabric of Hannibal's shirt and pushes him back into a wall. Hannibal lets him do it, stumbles back until his body collides with the solid surface and Will can't move him any further, but he keeps pressing himself forward. Hannibal still attempts to move back, and his head smacks against the wall, hard enough for the man to wince.

"Sorry," Will murmurs. He lets up a bit on his grip on Hannibal's shirt, lets Hannibal gain his bearings again before pushing closer again.

Their bodies end up pressed from chests to hips and Will cups Hannibal's face with his hands, but doesn't move his face any closer.

"Aren't you going to say something?" Will asks through gritted teeth. God he's so in love, but he's angry, too. So many emotions wrapped up inside his head, he can't think straight.

"You lied to me," Hannibal breathes out.

"I can't go eight months without seeing you, Hannibal," Will says. He moves his face just a fraction of an inch away from Hannibal's, their lips nearly touching, but not quite. "Not after everything, not after Dolarhyde, and what we did together."

"Will, I- I really… I have everything planned out. I need time to make arrangements," Hannibal says. Will can see it in his eyes, a type of desperation, fighting with his need to seem controlled. But all of his control is crumbling around them, all of his defenses falling to the ground.

Will can't take it anymore, he closes the distance between their lips.

A little too fast, a little too eager, so his teeth clash with Hannibal and it's painful, but they soon recover and Will can't get enough of him. Can't get enough of those lips moving hungrily against his, their tongues sliding against one another, Hannibal's hands gripping his hips like his life depends on it.

He hasn't kissed anyone like this in a long time. Not even Molly.

Will groans into Hannibal's mouth, and rocks his hips forward, testing, assessing. Hannibal grips his hips tighter, pulls him even tighter to his body.

And Will is getting hard, and he feels Hannibal getting hard too, and he *needs* to do this, needs to cross this final boundary between them.

They finally break apart for air, panting, pulling in deep breaths. Will noses at the short hair along Hannibal's jaw. It's gentle, tender, and a big change of pace from their kissing.

"I want to fuck you, Hannibal," Will whispers. "But I don't want you to think that's all I want you for."

He kisses Hannibal's throat, then grazes his teeth along the skin. Hannibal swallows hard, and Will sucks at the skin just below Hannibal's jaw, rocking his hips slowly, and Hannibal is a shaking mess in front of him.

"You want it so bad, don't you?" Will murmurs against his neck. He pulls skin between his teeth, bites down just enough for Hannibal to whimper. "You're really coming undone just from this. It's been so long since you've been touched, hasn't it?"

Hannibal just nods and moves his hands so he can wrap his arms around Will's back.

"Come on, then," Will whispers, backing away from Hannibal, making Hannibal's arms fall to his sides. Will picks up one of Hannibal's hands and guides him over to the bed across the room. Hannibal sits down on the edge of the mattress, uncertain.

Will pulls his shirt over his head, drops it down to the floor. Hannibal just watches him do it, eyes raking up and down Will's bare torso. Up to his face.

"Your wounds are healing nicely," Hannibal whispers, voice shaking ever so slightly. Enough for Will to notice.

"Yeah. Cheek is scarring pretty good," Will shrugs. "I look like the Joker."

"No," Hannibal says, shaking his head.

Will smiles and moves forward, just as Hannibal scoots back onto the bed, allowing Will to climb over him. Will puts a hand on the mattress at Hannibal's hip, holding himself up, then cups Hannibal's cheek with the other hand.

He rubs his thumb along one of Hannibal's sharp cheekbones, something he has wanted to do for years. He dips his nail into the scar there, then kisses Hannibal softly on the lips.

"Always so calm and collected," Will muses, Hannibal's breath hot against his lips while he pants. "Yet here you are, falling apart just because I'm kissing you. I wonder what's going to happen when I get inside you."

"Please, Will," Hannibal says. So quiet, but so much pleading in his voice.

"Soon, baby," Will says.

Hannibal's face changes when Will calls him that, becomes so completely soft and enamored in a way Will has never seen him before. A small smile tugs at Hannibal's lips and he closes his eyes, still breathing heavy through his nose.

"You like that?" Will asks. On Hannibal's nod, Will continues, "Scary man like you, wiped out the entire Verger staff with just a hammer, ripped Dolarhyde's throat out with your teeth. Killed god knows how many more people. Who would think to call you baby? I must be insane. But you like it."

Will sits back on his heels, knees on either side of Hannibal's thighs, and slides his hands under Hannibal's shirt.

"Take this off," Will says.

Hannibal pulls the t-shirt over his head, starts folding it up, but Will plucks it out of his hands and throws it on the floor. He pushes Hannibal to lay down on his back across the mattress and Will trails his fingers over the healing bullet wound.

"You're okay?" Will whispers. He leans down to kiss the scar tissue.

Hannibal nods. "I had some help."

"Chiyoh?"

"Yes."

Will nods and comes back up to kiss Hannibal's lips again, then his throat, collarbone. He trails kisses down Hannibal's chest, takes one nipple between his teeth and bites down, causing Hannibal to moan and squirm under him. Will does the same to the other, then kisses Hannibal's stomach, once, twice, three times.

He hovers his face and hands  over Hannibal's clothed crotch and looks up at Hannibal through his lashes, asking for permission. Hannibal nods slowly.

Will smirks and unbuttons Hannibal's jeans, pulls down the zipper. He mouths at Hannibal's cock through his underwear.

"Will," Hannibal moans.

"Is this everything you thought it would be?" Will asks. He sits up a bit, grabs the waistbands of Hannibal's jeans and underwear and yanks them down. He stands up off the bed so he can pull them off fully, then he's back on Hannibal.

"I haven't done this in a while," Will says. He can't believe he's doing it now, either. It's like he's running on autopilot as he takes Hannibal's cock in his hand and gives him a few strokes before licking a line up the shaft.

Hannibal covers his mouth with a hand, trying to muffle his moan. Will knows it's been so long for him, that he's so touch starved.

“Let me hear you, baby,” Will says before taking just the head of Hannibal’s cock into his mouth, sucking lightly. Hannibal’s thighs shake and Will runs his hands down then pushes them back down onto the mattress as he takes Hannibal further into his mouth.

“Will,” Hannibal moans.

Will looks up at him through his bangs while he sucks Hannibal, taking him as far as he can, nearly gagging, before pulling off halfway and going back down. Hannibal watches him, mouth slack, breathy moans falling from his lips.

“Will, I won’t last long,” Hannibal gasps. He grips Will’s hair in his hand, but doesn’t try to pull Will off. He says again, “Will.”

He hums around Hannibal’s cock, then pulls off. He kisses Hannibal’s hip bones, his stomach, the scar from the bullet again.

He leans back, sitting on his knees between Hannibal’s legs, and just looks down at the man below him. A man who has caused him and so many others so much pain, and yet Will can’t see any of that right now. He sees a man so in love with Will it makes him tremble. A man so desperate to be touched by Will it makes him stupid. A man who falls apart for no one but Will.

Will knows it has always been him for Hannibal, just as it has always been Hannibal for him.

“Take- take your pants off, Will,” Hannibal whispers. “I need-”

“I know what you need,” Will murmurs, leaning back down to kiss Hannibal’s lips. He pulls back just a centimeter, and whispers, “You’re being so patient for me, aren’t you? You’re doing so well.”

Hannibal moans at the praise and arches his back, pushing up into the hand resting on his chest. Will gets off of Hannibal, then off the bed. He unbuttons his pants, and pushes them down along with his underwear, never taking his eyes away from Hannibal’s.

“How should we do this?” Will muses. “On your hands and knees, maybe?” He pauses, watching Hannibal’s face change. “No, of course not. You want to see me, don’t you?”

Hannibal nods. “Please.”

Will opens his nightstand drawer, taking out the lube and condoms he bought just for this. Just for Hannibal. He kneels on the bed, grabs a pillow, and gestures for Hannibal to lift his hips, shoving the pillow under them. He spreads Hannibal’s thighs and gets between them again. Hannibal bends his knees and plants his feet on the mattress, lifting his hips even more in a clear invitation.

“You’re glad I lied,” Will says, squeezing lube onto his fingers. He rubs Hannibal’s entrance with the tip of one finger. Will turns his head and kisses Hannibal’s knee as he pushes the finger into Hannibal’s tight body. “You’re so glad I’m here right now.”

“How did you get out of going?” Hannibal asks, gasping when Will finds his prostate and rubs teasingly.

“Had a meltdown and snapped at Jack at the last one. Told him you’re not good for me,” Will murmurs. He works his finger in and out of Hannibal, before pulling it out entirely. “But you’re being so good for me right now. Ready for another?”

Hannibal moans and nods, just as Will pushes two fingers inside of him. Will stretches him with those fingers before adding a third, and at that point Hannibal is more of a mess than he has been all night. Tears are welling up in his eyes, and Will leans forward to kiss his forehead.

“Am I hurting you?” Will asks.

Hannibal shakes his head and wraps his arms around Will’s shoulders. Tight.

“I-” Hannibal starts.

“What is it, Hannibal?”

“After everything, I did not know if we would ever end up here,” Hannibal says. “I am having trouble knowing if you are real.”

Will pulls his fingers out of Hannibal, wipes them on the sheets, then brings both hands to cup Hannibal’s cheeks.

“Believe me when I say there is nothing more real than us in this moment,” Will says, looking into Hannibal’s eyes. Eye contact with him has always been easier than with anyone else. He kisses Hannibal’s lips softly, and when he pulls away, the tears have started streaming down Hannibal’s cheeks.

“I know I don’t deserve this,” Hannibal says. “Why are you being so gentle? We have been nothing but destructive to each other for years. Why aren’t you angry with me?”

“I’m tired of fighting you. I’m tired of fighting my feelings,” Will says. He wipes the tears away from Hannibal’s face with his thumbs. “And, don’t think I’m not angry with you. I’m pissed, but there’s time for that later. There’s time for everything later, but right now…”

“I love you,” Hannibal whispers, cutting Will off. “I do. I really do.”

“I know,” Will responds. “I know, and I love you. I have for so long, but I never knew.”

Will pulls back and looks down at Hannibal again. His cock is leaking against his stomach. Will’s own is leaking and aching, having not been touched by anything but the graze of his sheets. He takes himself in his hand, giving himself a few quick strokes, before reaching for the box of condoms he set on the bed.

Hannibal grabs his wrist and shakes his head. “Were you tested in the hospital?”

“Yeah,” Will says. “They wanted to make sure I didn’t get anything from Dolarhyde’s blood. We kinda… shared that knife.”

“And are you clean?” Hannibal asks.

Will nods.

Hannibal takes the box out of his hand and tosses it to the side.

“If you’re okay with that,” Hannibal says, raising an eyebrow. He’s gotten himself back under control a bit, Will can tell. More poised than he has been all night.

“Fuck. Okay. Yeah,” Will breathes.

Hannibal picks up the lube and squeezes it onto his own hand and sits up, taking Will’s cock in his hand to slick him up. Will groans and leans forward to kiss Hannibal, hungry and desperate. Now Will is shaking, coming apart at Hannibal’s touch. Will’s been in control of this entire situation, Hannibal has barely touched him, and now Hannibal *is* touching him. And the touch feels so good, as opposed to so many times when Hannibal hurt him in the past.

This is second to the feeling of standing on that cliff together, clutching onto each other’s bodies. Will doesn’t think he’ll ever feel more alive or as good than in that moment, but *this* is a close second.

Then Hannibal lays back, and spreads his legs again and Will starts pushing inside him, and, no *this might be it,* he thinks to himself. He thinks this might be better than that night on the cliff, and can’t imagine how much better it would feel if they were covered in blood after another shared kill.

Will moans and leans forward, catching Hannibal’s lips with his own as he pushes all the way in. Hannibal kisses him back, then brings a hand to cup Will’s wounded cheek when Will pulls away. Will doesn’t move yet, just stays frozen in this moment, staring down at Hannibal while he stares back.

And god Will thinks he has gone insane. No, he *knows* he has. Because no one but a complete lunatic could look into the Chesapeake Ripper’s eyes and feel love;  see love staring back at him. Tears start to fall from Will’s eyes and he kisses Hannibal again before starting to move inside him. Hannibal’s legs wrap around Will’s waist, pulling him closer, his arms find their way around Will’s back again, pulling him down to Hannibal’s body.

His rhythm is slow, but steady, and Hannibal is holding him so tight in almost hurts. Teeth sink into Will’s shoulder and Will cries out. He knows there’s going to be blood, and sure enough when Hannibal releases, and Will can pull back to look at him, there’s red across his lips and teeth.

Will speeds up his thrusts, changes his angle, and Hannibal grips the sheets and arches his back. Hannibal hugs Will tight around the waist and before Will can even understand what’s happening, he’s underneath Hannibal and Hannibal is riding him.

“Fuck,” Will groans. Will’s hands fly to Hannibal’s hips, guiding him, encouraging, but not forceful. It’s clear Hannibal is entirely back in control now because all Will can do is lay back and let Hannibal take what he wants.

Hannibal smirks and takes his own cock in his hands, jerking himself off while he fucks himself on Will’s cock. Hannibal moans out Will’s name as he comes on Will’s stomach and chest, clenching tight around Will as he rides out his orgasm. Hannibal’s hips come to a halt after a few seconds and he pulls off of Will, much to Will’s annoyance.

All that annoyance is gone when Hannibal licks his own release off of Will’s stomach, kisses the scar he left all those years ago in his kitchen, then takes Will’s cock into his mouth. Will thrusts up into his mouth, unable to stop himself, and Hannibal hums in agreement, so Will keeps that up until he’s coming down Hannibal’s throat with a moan, gripping Hannibal’s hair tight between his fingers.

Hannibal doesn’t pull off until it’s painful, and at that point Will can’t do anything but look at him, then lift a hand, reaching out for him.

They don’t talk about it, there’s no need to. They’re both tired and sated, and it’s too late for a conversation. Will reminds himself that they have time for that. Hannibal takes Will’s hand, pulls him to sit up, then pulls Will into his arms in a crushing hug.

Eventually they end up horizontal again, tangled in each other’s arms, legs intertwined. Will is crying, head buried in Hannibal’s chest. He thinks Hannibal might be crying, too, but neither man says anything. For once, they’re both at a loss for words with each other. They just hold on tight and Will lets himself fall asleep in Hannibal’s arms.

# Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

My mental health has been thumbs down this week, so this chapter took a bit longer than I had hoped for. I think for now I'm gonna stick to just 1 chapter a week instead of aiming for two. It's more realistic considering where I'm at with myself and my motivation.

Thank you for all the love on this story, I appreciate it more than you know. If I don't respond to comments right away it's because I'm just not feeling up to a lot, but I promise you I read each one and appreciate them all.

* warning: Some minor character deaths in this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will wakes and Hannibal is gone. The only signs he was even there are the bite on his shoulder, and Hannibal's discarded t-shirt in the corner of the room. He just sighs and lays flat on the bed, blankets pooled around his bare hips.

He thinks for a hopeful second that Hannibal is cooking breakfast, but there's no sound coming from the kitchen, no smell of food, either.

After wallowing for close to an hour, Will gets up and showers. Then he gets dressed and calls a cab to take him back to the place he left his car. He didn't leave anything in the hotel room, and he doesn't need to bother checking out, so he doesn't. He just gets into his car and drives back home.

There's a note on the counter that he hadn't noticed before he left the house, having not actually gone into the kitchen. For a minute he thinks it's going to say that Hannibal just went out for groceries, but it doesn't. It just says two words.

*Six weeks.*

And Will knows that's the next time Hannibal's going to kill, it has to be. He dials the phone number he's been using to call Hannibal on for that last three weeks and his heart nearly breaks.

" *Sorry, the number you are trying to reach has been disconnected,"* says the automated voice.

Will doesn't know why he expected anything different. God, but he's sad about it. He had an inkling of hope that Hannibal would change his mind and take Will with him wherever he is.

That he would feel what Will actually feels for him and would understand that Will isn't playing around.

Now he has to wait six weeks, and that's not even a guarantee that he will see Hannibal again. It's just a warning of when the next kill is going to happen. That hurts. So much uncertainty.

He was good to Hannibal, he was loving, even *said* that he loves him, but Hannibal still doesn't trust him. Disconnected his cell phone so Will can't contact him first.

It hurts.

Hurts just like everything else Hannibal has done to him, but he can't let him go for some twisted reason. He's in love to the point that he has no regard for himself, nor does he care about the harm that comes with Hannibal. But there's love there, too. A vulnerable man who loves obsessively. Who just happens to have defense mechanisms. Will can't blame him for that.

Will sits down on the couch and stares at the journal for a minute. He wonders if he should read more or not. Then he glances to the fireplace and considers starting a fire and throwing it in. To burn it so he never has a chance to read it again.

He gets as far as starting a fire, getting it going, but he clutches the journal in his hands as he stands in front of the flames. He looks down at it, opens to a random page. A drawing of Hannibal and Will sitting together in a bathtub, wine glasses forgotten on the bathroom floor while they kiss.

His fingers trail along the lines of graphite. He wipes away an eraser shaving that has been flattened between the pages. Looking down at it, he feels a twist in his gut. He thinks of kissing those lips, holding Hannibal in his arms, pressing their bodies close.

Will just sinks to his knees on the floor, holding the journal to his chest while he sits in front of the fireplace. Winston and Buster come up to him, paw at his knees, whine at him, then lay down right next to him. Will lays on the floor, his chest hurting, his eyes prickling with tears. He doesn't know how his life ended up here, but he wishes he could be anywhere else. Anywhere else as long as he can be with Hannibal.

He lays there for minutes, maybe hours. Could have even been days, for all he cares. His phone starts ringing across the room and he jumps up, thinking it might be Hannibal. But it's not.

"Hey Jack," Will answers.

"You sound gloomy," Jack says instead of a greeting.

"Was napping," Will lies. He clears his throat, tries to sound like he's not on the verge of tears. "What's up?"

"I was calling to tell you about Lecter's latest victim," Jack explains.

Will frowns. “Anyone important?”

Jack sighs. “I didn’t want to tell you last night because I was afraid you’d jump on a plane to be a part of this.”

“Jack who is it?” Will asks.

“Chilton.”

“No fucking way,” Will says. He wants to laugh. “Why didn't you tell me sooner?”

“Again, I figured you’d try joining the case,” Jack says. “Body’s being shipped up to Quantico. You can come in when he gets here.”

“Sure. How did no one notice Chilton was missing?” Will asks.

“He had been sent home from the hospital. No one really checks up on him,” Jack says. “Lecter killed the nurse that lives with him.”

“Shit,” Will sighs. “So he killed the nurse, kidnapped Chilton, then drove him down to New Orleans? The location feels personal, Jack.”

“Yeah, which is another reason it’s good you stayed home. We think he did it on purpose, thinking he would catch you down there,” Jack says.

Will smiles. Considering the fact that he was inside Hannibal last night, Will obviously isn’t too worried, but he’s glad Jack is worried about him. Jack will always see Will as one of Hannibal’s victims, and not the man that can reduce him to a shaking, crying mess with just his words and hands.

“He would be better off finding me here,” Will says.

“He doesn’t want you to have the advantage of being in your own home, I’m sure,” Jack says.

“Yeah, I’m sure you’re right,” Will says. He’s done with this conversation. He needs to celebrate Hannibal finishing the job on Chilton while he wallows about Hannibal being gone again. He says, “I have to go.”

And Jack responds with, “Take care,” before Will hangs up.

After that Will goes into the kitchen and opens the fridge, his stomach telling him he’s hungry even if he’s too sad to eat. There’s a bowl in the fridge with foil over the top. A piece of paper on top of it.

*Our dear friend Frederick Chilton was kind enough to provide the meat for this meal. You did not mention it last night, and I didn’t have a moment where I felt I could mention it, but I do hope you’re happy with this. I had wanted you to see him in person, but of course you had other plans. I never could predict you. At this point I’m unsure if I even want to.*

*Hannibal*

*PS - I wish I did not have to leave so hastily, but I hope you can understand why I did.*

Will lifts the foil to see a stew of some sort. Meat and vegetables. The meat is no doubt Chilton, but Will has to wait until he talks to Jack to know exactly what organs. He decides to heat it on the stove and eat it without knowing. It's not as though he hasn't eaten mystery organs before.

It's good, just as everything Hannibal has made for him has been.

He is a bit less sad, a bit less empty having read the note. Knowing Hannibal still cares.

Will does understand why Hannibal had to leave early, but he doesn't understand why he could not wake Will before he went, just to say goodbye. Or why he disconnected the phone so quickly.

As he lays in bed that night, thinking about the night before, he wonders what he needs to do to bring Hannibal back to him. He thinks about what he did years ago in order to draw out the Ripper. Randal Tier, and Freddie Lounds come to mind. How Hannibal had known Lounds wasn't really dead, how that changed everything.

Hannibal had known Freddie was alive, still tried to convince Will to run with him. Tried to give him a second chance…

Then he sits up abruptly, having an idea.

Hannibal wants Will to prove himself. Will knows how he can do it. And he knows when, too.

With six weeks until Hannibal's next kill, but three weeks since the one before Chilton, Will wonders if Hannibal is giving Will a turn. Every three weeks would make more sense than Hannibal going three, then six. But if he left that three week mark open for a reason… Even if he didn't, Will thinks Hannibal will be appreciative of Will doing this.

And he knows it has to draw Hannibal back to him. Either because it'll prove Will to him, or because Hannibal will be pissed. Either one works for Will.

Still, he has three weeks to wait. Three weeks to wallow in self pity. Three works to think about the one night they shared together.

He ends up in the lab two days after his conversation with Jack, looking down at Chilton's body. Split in half at the waist. Like Andrew Caldwell years ago.

"What's missing?" Will asks. He just wants to know what he might have eaten, he doesn't give a single shit about Hannibal's motivation behind which organs, or the surgical procedure he used. He just wants to know what he ate.

"Heart, lungs, intestines, kidney. Looks like parts of his legs," Price says.

“Not sure why Lecter would want to eat something so… uh… Crispy,” Zeller comments.

Jack glares at him from across the room.

*It didn’t taste burnt,* Will thinks, but does not say. He is sure Hannibal fed the dogs Chilton sausages. Which makes him wonder where Hannibal is staying and how he is making this food. Surely he doesn’t have all of his old supplies, but it seems he’s doing just fine.

Maybe Chiyoh has a house.

“So, the last body turned up three weeks before Chilton’s. Do we think another will drop in three weeks?” Will asks. He knows that’s exactly what is going to happen, and while it will not be one of Hannibal’s, it will be close enough that no one will know but him and Hannibal and the victim he intends.

“It’s possible. Before we would have three victims within a total of two weeks, then nothing for months. Why is he doing it this way?” Jack asks.

“Because we know it’s him. Limited resources. Less strength,” Will shrugs. “He might just be finishing up unfinished business and it’s taking him a while to locate people. Or he wants to draw it out.”

“So we should be worried, then,” Jack says.

“He’s not going to kill me or you, Jack,” Will tells him. Well, Will knows Hannibal won’t kill him. Jack… maybe. But not yet.

“What about us?” Price pipes up in the background.

“You guys are probably fine,” Will says.

Hannibal likely doesn’t care about Zeller and Price one way or another. Not even a thought about them in his entire head.

Will goes home that night and takes an inventory of supplies he has and writes a list of supplies he will need. He only has two weeks to get everything ready, to leave a display of Hannibal’s caliber and pull it off, too.

He keeps all his supplies in the barn, though he really wishes he had somewhere better. Somewhere that isn’t on his property. He doesn’t have other options, so he spends the better part of a week getting that ready.

He’s terrified of a member of the FBI coming onto his land and seeing what he’s doing. What he’s planning.

Then of course, Will has to consider the fact that Hannibal is still watching his every move somehow.

He looks out into the woods at the edge of his property, always expecting to see Hannibal moving through the trees. He never does.

He’s miserable.

Hannibal doesn't call, doesn’t leave notes in his mailbox, certainly does not show up at his house.

And all Will can think about is how good he felt that night. How *right* it felt to finally fall into bed with Hannibal. And how he meant every single word he said to Hannibal that night. Every small praise, every large declaration.

He thinks about how Hannibal rode him until they were both shaking, how Hannibal sucked his cock until he couldn’t take it anymore, how they held each other afterwards while they both cried.

Every so often Will’s fingers slip under the collar of his shirt and feel the bite mark on his shoulder. He picks at the scab every time, lets it bleed. He wants it to scar. Always wants that reminder of that night.

During the time leading up to Will’s kill, he doesn’t read the journal. He actually hides it away inside a tackle box and ignores it entirely. Can't even look at the cover.

It hurts too badly for him to read it. To know what could have been. And he knows Hannibal said his feelings go beyond the sexual desire depicted, but that’s not all Will sees on those pages. Will sees love, tenderness, *happiness.* And it’s too much.

It makes him too sad to think about that happiness. There’s such a melancholic air to Hannibal’s words too. How much he longed for physical touch - Will’s touch - during those years is so evident. Not so much in the words, but in how Will’s empathy can just pick that up as if it’s written explicitly.

On the night that marks three weeks, Will steals a car from a neighboring farm. They have several on the property that never get driven, and likely won’t even realize it’s missing. Besides, Will is going to return it.

Getting into Freddie Lounds’ apartment is a lot easier than it should be, Will thinks. A crime journalist should probably have better security around her, but no. Will slips into the building like he lives there, then picks the lock to her apartment like he has a key to the place.

The hard part comes with the fact that Lounds sleeps with pepper spray under her pillow. Will just barely gets a gloved hand over the nozzle before she can spray it directly into his eyes. She puts up a damn good fight, too, but doesn’t dare scream. Smart.

When she realizes she is not getting her hands out of his grip, that the hand over her mouth will not be removed, nor will the knee digging into her stomach, she stops thrashing. The fear does not leave her eyes, though.

He gently pries the pepper spray out of her hand, and sets it far away, then manages to hold her mouth and nose shut until she passes out from lack of oxygen. He opens the bag he brought in, takes out the rope he brought and ties her to her desk chair, then shoves a sock in her mouth as a makeshift gag.

He quickly goes out to the car and brings in the rest of the things he needs. It's the dead of night and no one else is around. He has a hood up, but he knows he doesn't resemble Hannibal's height and build, so he steers clear of security cameras.

It's possible the FBI might think Hannibal shed some pounds, but there's no way he shrunk four inches. He needs to make this kill look as much like one of Hannibal's as possible, and he's not going to ruin it by showing up on security footage.

Freddie is still out when he makes it back to her apartment, so he sits and waits until she wakes again.

When she does, Will can't help but give her a devilish grin.

"Lounds, do you know why I'm here?" he asks.

She can't respond, not with the sock in her mouth.

He tells her, anyway.

"I'm here because I need to set things right," he tells her. "You remember, surely. Four years ago, maybe? When Hannibal Lecter had thought I killed you."

Freddie nods.

"Yes, so, I need him to come back to me, you see. I need to prove to him that I am with him this time," Will continues. "And to do that. You need to go."

Freddie starts shaking her head, frantically. She tries pulling against her restraints, to no avail. Tries screaming around the gag, but it just does not work. Will grins at her again.

"Murder Husbands, you called us," he says, mostly to himself. "Well, I dare say you were right on both fronts."

He stands from where he is perched on her bed, moves to the bags he brought in.

Will would have loved mounting her on a rack of antlers. On a stag's head out in a field somewhere. Just as Hannibal had left him Cassie Boyle all those years ago. The first time he killed for Will.

Sadly, that won't work. He doesn't trust himself to get Freddie's body out of this room, nor did he think he could get a stag head in. It would have been too hard to explain either of those things if someone would have seen him. A man carrying a couple duffel bags into an apartment is not hard to explain if someone stopped him in the hall.

Instead he'll have to do something simpler.

He can't very well set her on fire either, not how he had done to the other body years ago, the one thought to be her. It would fit to do something that has been done before, just how Silvestri's last victim, the one Hannibal had saved then killed, was displayed as Silvestri's first.

But within Freddie's apartment complex, he doesn't think he could safely recreate the burnt body. He needs to come up with a new design entirely for Freddie Lounds.

"I'll be honest, Freddie. I have never liked you," Will says. "And as much as I would *love* to claim this kill as my own, I cannot do that. Everyone will think he did it. But he and I will both know that it was me. A gift for him, a declaration of my love for him. You're going to be elevated in a way that you do not even deserve."

With that, with nothing left to say, Will snaps her neck and gets to work.

He gets home, only a bit of blood on his clothes. He just throws them all right into the fireplace and starts a fire. He goes to bed, buzzing with the night's activities.

No sleep comes for him, too electrified, too hopeful that Hannibal knows already and is going to call any minute. Of course no call comes. It's four in the morning, and Hannibal needs sleep like anyone else. He won't have seen what Will did. With no Freddie Lounds to report on tattlecrime, Will knows it may take some time before Hannibal does see.

It takes a few days before Jack calls.

"I know we agreed no Ripper scenes, but this one might be of interest to you," Jack says when Will answers. "You don't need to go in his head, just come see it."

So Will agrees, trying to sound casual as he can but he practically runs to the car after Jack tells him the address. He scans the edge of the woods with his eyes, trying to see if Hannibal is out there. Watching him. He doesn't see anyone.

Surrounding the apartment complex are FBI vans, police cars, and tons of people trying to find out what the hell is going on.

Jack waves him through into Freddie's bedroom.

Will looks down at her lying naked on her bed. Red hair flowing on a blue sheet under her, a hand covering her breasts, the other covering her pelvis, a white sheet at her feet to resemble a shell. Pink flowers scattered around her. Just as he left her.

"The Birth of Venus," Will says.

"Yes, but why?" Jack asks. "First victim was a copy of Silvestri. Chilton was cut in half like one of Lecter's victims years ago. What does he Birth of Venus have to do with Lecter?"

"Botticelli," Will murmurs.

"Right, but…"

"Hannibal and I found each other in Florence in the Uffizi Gallery in front of a different Botticelli painting," Will says. "Rinaldo Pazzi told me of *Il Mostro* before that. Hannibal did a display resembling Boticelli's Primavera over twenty years ago."

“So it’s a very loose recreation of a previous display. Different painting, same artist,” Jack clarifies.

“So it seems.”

“Venus is the goddess of love and beauty,” Jack says. “So why would Lecter turn Freddie Lounds into her?”

Will shrugs. “He was elevating her into art. Venus was the center of attention in this painting, much like how Freddie Lounds would always put herself in the center of scenes to get a story. That’s kind of a stretch, though. I don’t know, Jack. Hannibal just loves Botticelli.”

In honesty, Will chose it because of that reason. He didn’t want to make it so identical by going with the Primavera, so he went with The Birth of Venus. Also because Venus is a symbol of love. Just as this kill is a symbol of Will’s love for Hannibal.

“Who found her, anyway?” Will asks. He has to know.

Jack pulls an evidence baggy out of his pocket and hands it to Will. A note in Hannibal’s handwriting.

*You may wish to check in on Miss Lounds.*

*Regards,*

*Hannibal Lecter*

“Was left in my fucking mailbox this morning,” Jack mutters.

“The bastard,” Will says under his breath. God he wants to kill Hannibal, too. He saw everything, he knew. He probably followed Will to the apartment complex from his house. He looks at the carefully stitched seam up the middle of her body. “I take it we won’t know what he took until we open her up.”

“Right,” Jack answers.

“Right. I’m going home, then,” Will says.

Jack nods and waves him off.

Will goes home with the intention of cooking Freddie’s heart.

But first, he checks the mail. A letter from Hannibal sits on top of the stack.

He gets home and sits at the kitchen table while he reads it.

*My dear Will,*

*How it pains me to not be able to see you. How I wish I could have been there while you took Freddie’s life. I am confident it was beautiful. I am yours, fully. Do not think that I am not. I*

*did not require Miss Lounds as proof of your love.*

*When the time is right, I will come back to you. It is not you who has sent me away. I am not gone because of you. Not anymore. It is too painful to stay away, but there are things that need to happen first. If I could have stayed that morning in your arms, I would have forever.*

*If I could have endured seeing your face. Pleading, and disappointed, and sad, I would have woken you to say goodbye. I could not have handled it. If it is any consolation, I did kiss you goodbye before I left.*

*I love you greatly.*

Will's heart is beating so hard in his chest. His eyes are brimming with tears. He doesn't know why he's reacting this way; still doesn't understand why he feels so strongly towards this man. He just does. Just loves him beyond belief, beyond reason. He keeps reading, but the letter takes on a different emotion, the words conveying coldness rather than love.

*Though, I must tell you how disappointed I am, as well. Freddie Lounds was to be one of my future kills. And while I do believe you once deserved this one, you had your chance years ago, and did not take it. That said, I now need to replan and rearrange.*

*I had been hoping she would come at a time when we were together. I would have wanted you to see me take her life. Show you how it is done.*

*As it is, you cannot take back what has happened, nor am I sure I would want you to if you could. I saw your display, and I would not have changed a single thing.*

*All my love,*

*Hannibal*

Will feels like could cry when he finds another slip of paper in the envelope with a new phone number written on it.

He doesn't even hesitate to call.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know what you think!

# Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“My love,” Hannibal says when he answers after the first ring.

“You absolute fucking asshole,” Will says in return. “Are you crazy? Showing up at Jack’s house to drop off a note. Baby, you could have just left prints at the scene and it would’ve been enough, but no you had to show up at Jack Crawford’s house to hand deliver a note. Are you stupid?”

“It is so good to hear from you, darling,” Hannibal responds.

“ *Darling?”* Will repeats. “I’m calling you stupid and you call me darling? Jesus Christ.”

“Mm, you’re lovely and have such a way with words. And I know your terms of deprecation come from a place of love and concern,” Hannibal answers.

“Hannibal,” Will says. He bites his lip before speaking. He tries not to get his hopes up right now. “What do I have to do to convince you to come over right now?”

“Tell me how it felt to kill Freddie Lounds,” Hannibal says quietly.

“I thought of nothing but you,” Will answers. “Afterwards it felt like everything finally clicked into place. Like things were finally *right.”*

“If I do come back,” Hannibal starts. “I cannot stay long.”

“Okay,” Will says. He knew that would be the case.

“What would you like to do with me? How will you wish to spend that time, my dear?”

“Anything. I just want to be with you,” Will answers honestly. He feels like honesty, no matter how stupid he feels or sounds, is the best approach. “Just sit with me if you want. Just talk to me. Cook me dinner.”

“I can be there by 8 pm,” Hannibal whispers through the phone. That’s hours away.

Before Will can respond, Hannibal has hung up the phone.

Will spends the next several hours making sure the house is clean. Then he makes himself a sandwich because he’s hungry and can’t wait until dinner. He ends up napping on the couch for a bit, as well. Then for an hour leading up to Hannibal's arrival, Will just sits and watches out the window.

Just after eight, a car is pulling up in front of his house and Hannibal is getting out of the driver's seat. And Will cannot believe that he actually came when asked.

Will tries to wait until Hannibal knocks on the front door. He really does, but Hannibal gets to the steps at the bottom of the porch and then Will is flinging the front door open and throwing himself at Hannibal.

Hannibal catches him around the waist, lifting him off the ground as they embrace, Will's arms wrapped tightly around his neck.

"You're here," Will whispers.

"I am," Hannibal replies.

He sets Will down and they take the stairs up the porch and into the house. Buster and Winston run right to him and he pulls treats out of his pocket for them.

"Who are those made out of?" Will asks.

"I do not feed your dogs human meat, Will," Hannibal says. He wipes his hands on his pants and shrugs off the jacket he's wearing. As if he owns the place, he drapes it over the back of one of Will's chairs, then opens his arms.

Will goes into them, resting his head against Hannibal's chest, squeezing him tight around the ribs.

"I believe I agreed to cook you dinner," Hannibal murmurs.

"Yeah. Just. Give me a second?" Will asks. He doesn't want to let go yet, for fear that Hannibal isn't actually real, isn't actually standing in his house. And because he knows their time together is limited.

"I have missed you," Hannibal says.

"Your fault," Will tells him. "Entirely your fucking fault."

"Yes, but as I have told you, there are things that-"

Will cuts him off. "What kinds of things need to be done, Hannibal? We want each other. You obviously haven't been staying far. What needs to be done?"

He removes himself from Hannibal's arms while he speaks, begins pacing the room.

"Darling," Hannibal says. It's a placating tone, a word to try and get Will to calm down and come back. Will stops pacing, but stands on the opposite side of the room. "I have unfinished business in the States. You need to prove to Jack that you are trustworthy during this time. It would not do good for us to stay together, or have any chance of people seeing us together now. Not until we can leave."

"Why do you need to finish this business?" Will asks. "Why can't we just *go?"*

"There are arrangements to be made, beside. What if I told you a house is being built for us?" Hannibal asks. "Or that I have a few favors to exchange for our new documents? Or that I am

doing everything I possibly can to ensure your dogs can come with us? And all the while, I am trying to keep an eye on you so that you do not do something idiotic."

"I don't need a fucking babysitter," Will nearly yells. "Get your shit done, for fucks sake. Get your shit done, don't worry about *stalking* me in the meantime, unless you're gonna come in for a drink while you do it. And let's fucking get out of the country."

Hannibal frowns, just a small one that anyone else likely wouldn't even catch.

"I'll refrain from stalking you if I don't intend on saying hello, then," is all Hannibal says. "Dinner?"

Will huffs out a breath of air. "Yeah. Yes. Dinner."

"Miss Lounds, I presume? Tell me, my love, what did you take from her?"

"Heart and lungs," Will says.

"Very nice," Hannibal says. He walks into Will's kitchen without another word, leaving Will in the living room. He collects himself, calms himself, reminds himself not to fuck this up before it even starts, then follows Hannibal into the kitchen.

Hannibal cooks him dinner, uses ingredients from around the kitchen. Doesn't mention how bare Will's kitchen is of food. While the meal is in the oven, Hannibal holds a hand out to Will.

Will goes to him. He has been standing in the doorway watching the entire time, but now they're standing in front of each other in front of the fridge.

Hannibal lifts his hands to Will's face, looks into his eyes, and Will just stares back. No barriers, no walls. Hannibal is letting Will see him. See and feel the love, the desire, the longing.

Their lips touch and Will didn't even realize he was leaning in until they do, didn't realize Hannibal had either. Their first kiss in weeks. Will feels weak in the knees, and just as he thinks he might honestly collapse, Hannibal wraps a strong arm around his waist and pulls their bodies close. Holding him close and keeping him from falling.

The kiss is gentle and soft, but filled with emotion. A tender caress of lips against lips, nothing more. It doesn't need to be more.

When Will finally pulls away, there's a smile on his face. One on Hannibal's too.

"Spend the night," Will whispers. "No one will come here. You're safe."

"I shouldn't," Hannibal whispers back. "You know I shouldn't."

"Please," Will says. "Just stay with me. Until I fall asleep, at least."

Hannibal kisses him once more, then nods. No words, just a nod, then he turns away and starts pulling plates out of a cupboard and forks out of a drawer.

They eat Freddie Lounds together. For real this time. And after dinner, they wash the dishes together.

Will can't believe this. That he's doing this with Hannibal Lecter. So normal, so domestic, so peaceful.

Of course, they have cooked together in the past. Have had normal interactions before everything else. But this is different. There's love here. There's also memories of past pain and betrayal.

They don't speak of either. They both know.

They undress and just look at each other as they stand on opposite sides of Will's bed. After a few moments, they get under the blankets, in nothing but their underwear. Will rolls over and rests his head on Hannibal's shoulder. He brings one leg to lay over Hannibal's, a hand splayed on his chest.

Hannibal has a hand on his back. Gentle and grounding. Loving.

They lay there together for a while, neither quite wanting to fall asleep because both know they won't wake up together. Won't be able to say goodbye in the morning.

Will wants this forever. A forever where they're safe and together and no longer trying to kill each other or put the other in prison.

"Could it have been like this?" Will asks quietly. "If we left before?"

They both know what time he's talking about. They both know he means this kind of dynamic. Laying in each other's arms. Casual conversation. Stealing kisses every so often. Two dogs snoring a few feet away. Simple.

"I would have liked for it to be," Hannibal answers. There's pain in his voice. Sadness and heartbreak from another time resurfacing in his head and chest. Will can feel every last bit of it. He feels similarly.

"I'm sorry," is all Will can say. He carries so much regret over how their relationship has played out over the years. How simple it could have been if he chose Hannibal sooner.

"I'm sorry, too," Hannibal whispers. And Will believes him. Because likely for the first time in his life, Hannibal really is sorry. And Will can feel it rolling off of him in waves.

Will lifts his head from Hannibal's shoulder and kisses him on the lips, then kisses his forehead. He lays back down, Hannibal wraps his arms around him, and he lets himself sleep.

The morning light is coming through the curtains when Will wakes. And he wakes because Hannibal is pulling himself out of Will's arms and getting out of the bed. Will reaches out

and grabs onto his wrist.

“Don’t disconnect your phone,” Will says. Because he's been thinking about the disconnected phone for three weeks and he can’t handle that amount of separation again.

“I won’t,” Hannibal says. He tries to pull his hand free, but Will’s grip tightens. He knows Hannibal can get out if he tries, but the effort put into it isn’t genuine. He says, “I must go.”

“Kiss me,” Will requests.

Hannibal leans back down and pushes Will’s hair out of his heavy eyes and kisses his forehead, then his lips.

“I love you,” Will tells him, against Hannibal’s lips when he just barely pulls away. Hannibal kisses him again for it.

“And I you,” Hannibal responds.

Hannibal leaves after that and Will feels satisfied. Knowing that he can call, knowing that Hannibal could come back if Will asks. Of course, Will doesn’t ask. He doesn’t call right away, either.

He decides that, if they’re not leaving for a while, he needs to get the rest of his things from Molly’s house.

So, a week after Freddie’s murder, he tells Jack not to call him in because he’ll be out of state. He does not, however, tell Hannibal where he is going.

The dogs get into Will’s car and he starts the long drive to Molly’s. On the way, Hannibal calls and Will accept, holding the phone to his ear and steering with his other hand.

“Hey,” Will answers.

“My love,” Hannibal greets in turn. “What are you up to?”

“Driving. I have things to pick up from Molly’s house,” Will tells him truthfully.

“Ah, yes. The wife,” Hannibal says. He is not amused. Annoyance and jealousy clear as day.

“Ex-wife. Divorce was finalized,” Will tells him. “Did you call for a reason or just to hear my voice?”

“I was curious about something,” Hannibal starts. “I figure it would be proper form to ask before our next sexual encounter.”

“Mm. Ask away.”

“How would you feel about being tied up?” Hannibal asks.

Not exactly what Will expected to be asked, but not entirely an unwelcome question, either.

“You have done worse things to me,” Will answers. Half a joke, though it’s true.

“That is not a yes,” Hannibal says. Will can hear the frown in his voice as clear as day.

“Is it like a control thing?” Will asks. “You didn’t have control last time.”

“Partly, yes.”

“You don’t need to restrain me to gain control. We could always just take things slower so you can compose yourself whenever you need to,” Will suggests. “But if you want to, then sure. I just need to be able to get out if I have to.”

“Of course, love. I just thought I would ask. I was unsure how you would react to the idea considering our past and who I am.”

“For some dumb fucking reason I still haven’t figured out, I trust you,” Will tells him. “And I’m driving so I’m going to hang up, but I’ll call you when I get to Molly’s house.”

“You aren’t scared of her knowing you’re talking to me,” Hannibal says. It almost sounds like a question, like Hannibal is worried.

“She knows I left her for you,” Will admits.

“Oh?”

“Yeah,” Will sighs. “Can we talk about it later? I’d rather not wreck my car.”

“Of course, darling. Drive safely.”

He drives a bit faster after that. If only so he can get to Molly’s and call Hannibal back. He’s going to arrive late in the evening, sleep on the couch, then drive home the next morning. He almost considers making the drive back tonight and asking Hannibal to meet him at his house. He doesn’t.

Molly greets him with a friendly hug. The rest of the dogs jump up on him, then go to run outside with Buster and Winston.

“I have to make a call real quick,” Will tells Molly after he takes his coat off.

Molly frowns, but quickly brings her face back to a neutral expression. Will sees it, though. Knows that she knows who he’s about to call.

Will smiles weakly at her then leaves the front of the house to make the call from the kitchen.

“Will,” Hannibal answers. His voice is warm and Will wants to live inside it.

“Hey, baby. I made it to Molly’s,” Will says quietly. Molly knows who he’s talking to, but he doesn’t want to rub it in her face.

“When will you be leaving?” Hannibal asks.

“Tomorrow morning.”

“You’re staying the night,” Hannibal states.

“Sleeping on the couch, yeah,” Will says. “I know you’re jealous, but you have no reason to be. Molly and I are on the same page.”

“Yes, but you are the one visiting your ex’s home, so might I ask what the exact page you are on is?”

“Fuck off,” Will says. There’s no real malice behind his words, and he attempts to sound playful, but it doesn’t quite come out right. “Look. If we aren’t leaving any time soon, I’m making my house feel more like home. I need all my stuff if I’m going to do that.”

“I understand,” Hannibal sighs.

Will turns when he hears Molly’s footsteps. She stops just in the kitchen doorway, leaning against the frame.

“I have to go. When will I see you again?” Will asks. His voice is barely above a whisper, but he knows Molly can likely hear him anyway.

“I’m taking my next victim in two weeks.”

“And are you going to show up at my house?”

“I may or I may not,” Hannibal says. Not committing. *Great,* Will thinks.

“Fine,” Will snaps. “Bye.”

“I love you,” Hannibal says.

Will just says, “Yeah,” and hangs up.

He looks over at Molly again, an eyebrow raised.

“Was that Lecter?” she asks. When Will doesn’t respond, she says, “I’m not going to tell anyone, Will. Do you really think I would risk it?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Will asks.

“He broke out of prison once already,” Molly states. “If he gets arrested again because *I* told the FBI you were in contact with him, or if *you* get arrested and he’s still out there, he’ll come for me either way.”

“He wouldn't,” Will says. Although, at this point he really isn’t too sure. He has to really convince Hannibal that Molly isn’t going to come between them ever.

“You really don’t know that, Will. Have you seen him? Since you got out of the hospital?”

Will bites his lip and looks past her instead of at her. He averts his eyes toward the ceiling, then nods.

Molly nods once, then walks to their liquor cabinet and pulls out a bottle and two glasses.

“Let’s talk about this,” she says. “But I need a drink before we do.”

“I really don’t-” Will starts.

“I want details, Graham. Tell me about him,” Molly says. She glances over at him from where she stands at the counter, pouring them each a drink. “I’ll tell you about the woman I‘ve been talking to.”

Will chokes on his spit. “You’re talking to someone?”

Molly laughs, a bubbly laugh that made him fall in love with her nearly three years ago. It doesn’t have the same effect on him as it used to. Now he can only think about how he wants to hear Hannibal laugh.

“You know her actually,” Molly says, handing Will a glass of whiskey.

“Do I?” Will asks. He takes a small sip and waits for her to keep talking.

“Reba McClane,” Molly says.

Will chokes on his drink this time. He coughs a few times, hand on his chest before saying, “Dolarhyde’s girlfriend?”

“Not anymore,” Molly says.

“Doesn't she live like five hours away?” Will asks.

Molly shrugs. “I made the drive last week, but we’ve just been talking on the phone, otherwise. I reached out to her a couple weeks ago.”

“Huh,” is all Will can say. “Well I’m happy for you. And for her.”

“Thanks, Will,” Molly smiles. “So. Lecter, then.”

“Hannibal. Yeah,” Will says. He scratches the back of his neck nervously. “He’s, um, he’s come by my house twice now. Well, more like four or five times. I was only there for two of them.”

“Did you have sex with him?” Molly asks.

Will sighs. “Yes.”

Molly nods. “And what comes next?”

“I don’t know,” Will tells her. It’s true, he really does not know when he’ll see Hannibal next, or where they’re going when the time is finally right.

“Did you tell him you love him?”

“Yes.”

“Did he say it back?”

“He said it first,” Will says.

“Wow,” Molly says. She throws back her drink and pours herself another. Will shakes his head when she offers the bottle to him.

“Where’s Wally?” Will decides to ask.

“Staying at my mom’s house. He’s been having a hard time being at home since the attack,” Molly says.

“How have you been?”

“I’m thinking about selling the house and moving,” Molly admits. “It’s tough.”

“I’m-” But what can Will really say? Sorry doesn’t cut it. Not when he’s fucking the guy that sent Dolarhyde after Molly and her son. How can he say sorry and expect her to believe.

“I know, Will,” she says, saving him from the trouble. “You have history with Lecter… and I know that this life just isn’t right for you.”

“Yeah,” Will sighs. He stares down into his drink, swirling the liquid in his glasses.

“Are you going to start killing?”

Will looks up at her, surprised. The question doesn’t seem to have any ulterior motives behind it. She’s not asking so she can call the police. She just wants to know.

“I don’t know,” Will says. He already killed Freddie Lounds, though. Already plans on killing Bedelia. Plans on following Hannibal to the end of the earth.

He sets his half finished glass down on the counter and rubs his hands over his face.

“I should start packing my things, I think,” he says.

“Right. Let me know if you need help with anything,” Molly says.

Will nods and leaves the kitchen. He lets the dogs inside, bends down to pet all of them.

“Do you want me to take any more?” Will asks. “I have the room. I’m… lonely at home.”

“Not getting enough love from your new boyfriend?” Molly teases.

“I’ve seen him twice since we took down the Dragon. Only a handful of times before that. Nothing for three years. You know, the last time I saw him before I went back was when I was being asked in court if we were romantically involved,” Will tells her. “And I loved him

then and didn't even realize it. And everyone else thought we were fucking then, too. God, I was so unaware of my feelings."

Molly just listens and Will just keeps talking.

"And he showed up at my house to feed Buster and Winston while I was in El Paso looking at one of his crime scenes," Will says, shaking his head. "Left me a meal and a note. I tricked him the next time. Told him I was going down to New Orleans to see the body he left. Set up one of those security cameras and laid low in a hotel until he showed up."

He looks up at her. She just stands there in the doorway, eyes intent on him where he sits on the floor with the dogs. Will realizes there's tears forming in his eyes, but he wipes them away.

"I went home to him, and we had sex that night, and he was gone when I woke up. I was scared that he thought that was all I wanted from him," Will says. "He's left me literal love letters. Has left me meals. And I know they're human, but of course I eat them. I ate all his meals before, so what's the difference?"

Molly doesn't even react to that. She knows that part already, Will is sure of that.

"I'm making a terrible fucking decision," Will says after a second. "But I can't find it in me to let him go. I tried. I tried pushing him away three years ago and he just… turned himself in for me. And now, I can't keep pushing him away. After every fucking thing. He's tried to kill me, but I love him and I can't stop. And he won't… he doesn't trust me yet. He won't take me with him. He disconnects his cell phone so I can't contact him sometimes. It hurts. But I can't stop."

There are tears streaming down Will's face now. It's cathartic to talk about. He can't talk to anyone at all about this, but Molly just listens. And if she decides to call Jack Crawford and tell him everything, then at least Will got to talk about it to someone. Instead of bottling up every single thing he's felt.

"Fuck. Sorry," Will laughs quietly. Somewhat embarrassed. No, definitely embarrassed. Crying in front of his ex-wife because he's in love with his ex-psychiatrist who happens to be a cannibalistic serial killer. Embarrassing.

"Will. It's okay. You've been needing to tell someone all that for a while now, I take it," Molly says quietly. "Your secrets are safe with me."

"Thanks, Molly," Will says. He wipes his tears again and stands up.

"Of course. And yes, you can take as many dogs as you want," she says, bringing the conversation back to where it started. Will realizes just how off track he got and gives her a sheepish smile and a nod.

He stands and starts gathering small things around the house that belong to him. He packs up all of his books, gets the rest of his clothes from their closet and dresser. Packs the rest of his fishing gear into the car. It's close to midnight when he finally finishes.

Molly has already gone up to bed, so Will shuts off all the lights on the main floor and undresses down to his underwear. He lays down on the couch and tries to fall asleep, but he can't get comfortable.

Around two, Will hears footsteps on the front porch, then the sound of the lock being picked. He stands up and walks carefully toward the front door after grabbing a fire poker from next to the fireplace.

The dogs all stand up and he hushes them so they don't wake Molly up. When the front door opens, Will is ready to jump out from behind it and impale their intruder when Winston starts wagging his tail and Buster starts wiggling his butt and jumping.

Will peers around the door and drops the fire poker with a clatter, throwing himself into Hannibal's arms.

"What are you doing here?" Will hisses. He kisses Hannibal's cheek and Hannibal wraps his arms around his waist.

Will pushes the door shut with one arm then wraps both around Hannibal tightly.

"I am here to make sure you aren't sleeping with your wife," Hannibal murmurs.

"Ex-wife, you idiot," Will mumbles. "I'm sleeping on the couch."

"Come stay in a hotel with me," Hannibal whispers.

"No," Will says, stepping away. "No, you need to go back to wherever you came from."

"What if we both sleep on the couch?"

"So Molly can come down and find us together? And then call the police," Will says.

"You said she knows about us," Hannibal whispers. He reaches out and tugs Will back to him by a hand. "I'll be gone before she wakes."

"You shouldn't have come here at all. You should trust that I'm not sleeping with my ex-wife," Will says firmly. He melts back into Hannibal's arms, despite the irritation he feels. "I have missed you, though."

"Let me stay tonight," Hannibal whispers into his hair.

He kisses the top of Will's head and Will finds himself nodding and pushing at Hannibal's jacket. Hannibal slides it off and hangs it up on the coat rack, then kicks off his shoes and pants. He folds up his jeans and sets them down on a chair then walks over toward the couch.

Hannibal lays down on top of it in just his long sleeve shirt and underwear and Will looks at him from where he still stands by the door. After a second he walks over to Hannibal and lays down on top of him, resting his head on Hannibal's chest, settling on his stomach, mostly

between Hannibal's legs. Hannibal reaches for the blanket over the back of the couch and puts it over Will's back.

"Thank you," Hannibal whispers. He wraps his arms around Will's back.

"You're still an idiot," Will mumbles. He kisses Hannibal's chest and closes his eyes. Finally comfortable, finally safe. No longer lonely or aching for Hannibal's touch like he had been the entire week.

"Your idiot," Hannibal agrees. "Sleep well, darling."

Will falls asleep after that and wakes up in the morning.

To Molly yelling, "Oh goddammit, Will! A murderer in my home?"

"Hm?" Will lets out a groan and moves his head so he can look up at Hannibal's face, clearly smirking at him. "You said you'd be gone."

"And so it seems, I was wrong," Hannibal whispers. "Molly, I apologize for showing up unannounced. It is not Will's fault at all. He did try to send me away."

"You guys didn't have sex on my couch, did you?" Molly asks. Her tone isn't angry, just exhausted, mostly.

"No, Molly," Will says. He looks at Hannibal again. "You need to leave."

"May I cook breakfast?" Hannibal asks.

"No," Will says, just as Molly says, "Sure."

"Excellent," Hannibal smiles. "Love, please get off me."

"You're not making breakfast. You are *leaving,"* Will tells him. "I'm going to take a shower and you better be gone by the time I come downstairs."

"I'll shower with you," Hannibal says.

"Is he making breakfast, or not?" Molly asks.

"No," Will answers.

Molly leaves the living room and goes into the kitchen, leaving Hannibal and Will on the couch.

"She seems fine with me being here," Hannibal whispers.

"Fuck off," Will groans. He gets off of Hannibal and picks up his bag of clothes before heading up the stairs to the bathroom.

He can hear Hannibal's footsteps behind him, taking the stairs two at a time. Then he's being scooped off his feet and yelling at Hannibal to put him down.

“I will call the police if you don’t set me down,” Will says. “You don’t even know where the bathroom is.”

Hannibal takes a left into the bathroom, Will still in his arms, then sets him down on the floor and shuts the door behind them.

“I have missed you,” Hannibal says. Will lets him push down his boxers and watches as Hannibal drops to his knees.

“Hannibal, not right now,” Will sighs. He pushes Hannibal’s hair out of his eyes and caresses his cheek. “I do need to shower and then get on the road. Otherwise I’d let you.”

Hannibal kisses his hip bone then stands and removes his own shirt and underwear.

“I’m showering with you,” Hannibal tells him. He kisses Will’s lips, their first kiss since he arrived. “I have a hotel nearby under an alias. I’ll be staying there until nightfall before making the drive home.”

“Where *is* home for you?” Will asks. He turns and steps into the shower, turning it on. Hannibal steps in behind him and wraps his arms around Will’s waist.

“Wherever you are,” Hannibal murmurs.

“So you’re coming to me?” Will asks. He reaches for the soap and awkwardly washes himself while Hannibal clings to him.

Hannibal mouths at the side of Will’s neck and his jaw. “May I?”

“For how long?” Will asks.

“A few nights,” Hannibal whispers.

“It’s not safe,” Will sighs. “But I want you to.”

“I’m not worried about safety. I will kill anyone who tries to separate us,” Hannibal says.

“That’s not how it’s going to work, I hope you know that,” Will says. “We don’t stay and fight. If we know a threat is coming, we leave wherever we end up.”

“Are you truly prepared for a life on the run, darling?” Hannibal asks. He is so quiet, Will can barely hear him over the spray of the water.

“I would follow you anywhere,” Will whispers back.

Hannibal kisses the back of Will’s neck then reaches for the shampoo and starts to wash Will’s hair for him. No more words are needed after that declaration. Will just tilts his head back and lets Hannibal run his fingers through his wet curls.

After a few minutes there’s a knock on the bathroom door, and Molly’s voice calling out, “Wally’s going to be home in twenty minutes. I would prefer that no serial killers were in my

shower, or on my property by the time my son gets here."

Will turns and looks at Hannibal with a smirk and says, "Well, I guess we both better get out of here, then."

Hannibal smiles and kisses Will softly.

"We'll be out in a minute," Will calls back out to Molly. He says to Hannibal, "I'm bringing two more dogs home."

"Are you?" Hannibal asks.

"Yes. So when I'm away on cases and you want to feed them, bring enough sausage for four," Will says. He stands under the water, rinsing the rest of the conditioner out of his hair, then turns off the faucet.

They dry off quickly and Will gets dressed. Hannibal puts his t-shirt and underwear back on then walks out of the bathroom to find his pants that he left on the floor in the living room.

When Will finally leaves the bathroom he finds Hannibal sitting at the kitchen table with Molly, both drinking out of mugs of coffee. They're smiling at each other.

"What's going on here?" Will asks. He takes the mug from Hannibal's hand and drinks from it himself.

"Just talking about you," Hannibal answers.

"Well, stop," Will mumbles. "You need to leave."

"I believe she said *no* serial killers, darling," Hannibal says, taking the coffee back. "You also have to leave, then."

"And I will. After you," Will says. "I'll see you whenever you show up at my house, okay? Leave now."

"Alright," Hannibal says. "Molly, it was wonderful meeting you."

"You as well," Molly smiles.

Will walks Hannibal to the door, watches him put on his jacket and say goodbye to the dogs. Will pulls him in for one last kiss, then rests his forehead against his chest.

He doesn't want to let go, doesn't want to go back to that lonely feeling of Hannibal being gone. Even if just for a day or two this time.

"I will see you soon," Hannibal whispers. He kisses Will once then turns and leaves, not giving Will a chance to pull him back in.

Will doesn't understand how it's so easy for Hannibal to just walk away. Time and time again. Hannibal just turns and goes. Whether Will is injured, or standing there wishing for

another kiss. Hannibal just leaves.

Chapter End Notes

Leave comments!!!

# Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will goes back into the kitchen and sits at the table across from Molly. He drinks the rest of the coffee from the mug Hannibal left on the table and looks at her.

“You didn’t seem bothered at all,” Will says after a minute. “I mean. He’s killed close to a hundred people. And that’s just what we know about.”

“Maybe,” Molly shrugs. “But when I found you two this morning it really put things into perspective.”

“How?”

“You were never a cuddler with me. Never sought out my touch in that way. Would barely sleep in the same bed sometimes because you never slept peacefully next to me,” Molly says. “You looked peaceful in his arms, Will.”

Will doesn’t know what to say to that, but Molly keeps talking.

“Clearly you feel safe with him. Happy. And I know; you felt happy with me too, but I know it’s different.”

Will just nods once and looks down at the table.

“I can’t take that away from you when I know it’s something you’ve been waiting for,” Molly says.

“I’m sorry he came here,” Will says instead of addressing any of the things Molly just said. “He… picked the lock and I told him to leave, but…” Will trails off and shrugs.

“But you wanted a good night’s sleep and you haven’t slept well since the last time you saw him,” Molly finishes for him.

Will sighs and rubs his thumb along the rim of his mug. Sort of a nervous gesture, though he doesn’t know why he’s nervous. Molly has been nothing less than accepting this entire time.

“I can’t say no to him,” Will says after a few seconds too long. “He asked to stay, so I let him.”

“He’s very polite, I will say that,” Molly says with a smile. “He offered again to cook breakfast.”

Will smiles. “He hardly gets to cook for anyone anymore. I’m probably the only person. Unless he’s staying with Chiyoh.”

“Chiyoh?” Molly asks.

“She pushed me off a train and shot me in Europe, but she’s practically family to him,” Will says. “We don't get along, but if she’s keeping him safe, I can’t be picky.”

“The shoulder scar is hers?”

“Yes, that was her,” Will says. He decides to change the subject. “What were you talking about when I came down?”

Molly grins at him. “I was telling him about how often you used to fall down the stairs.”

Will groans and covers his face with his hands. “You didn’t.”

“I did. He found it very funny. I’m sure he’ll tease you about it.”

“Hannibal? Teasing? No,” Will says, shaking his head. “He’ll come up with some reference to Greek mythology, and then ask if it makes me want to go out and kill someone.”

“Did you kill Freddie Lounds?” Molly asks.

“That was a classic Il Mostro kill,” Will says.

“That’s not what I asked.”

“Would it change how you see me if I did?” Will asks. He doesn’t let her answer before he says, “I should get going. At this rate, Hannibal will make it home before me.”

“Is he going to your house?” Molly asks.

“Probably not for a few days.”

“Don’t get thrown in prison for him, Will. Be smart about this,” Molly says.

“Don’t worry about me, Molly. I don’t know what’s going to happen in the future, but I’ll come back a few times before we leave,” Will tells her.

Molly nods and reaches across the table to grip his hand in hers. There’s tears in her eyes, and Will knows it can’t be easy for her. Can’t be easy seeing her ex husband find everything in a cannibal that he couldn’t find with her.

He doesn’t know what else to say, doesn’t know what could possibly make her feel better about any of this. He’s glad Molly has found Reba, but he knows her life was still flipped upside down.

He pulls his hand away and stands, taking his leave not long after, getting Buster and Winston into the car, and then two of their newer dogs, Gimli, a chocolate lab, and Dallas, a Saint Bernard. The two of them listen to Will best out of him, Wally and Molly, so he decided to take them off their hands.

The drive home is long and he makes it back in the late evening. The dogs are excited to be out of the car and running around in the open space, and Will sits out on his porch for a few minutes before he starts unpacking and bringing all of his things inside. Halfway through, his phone rings. He sets the boxes on the ground and answers immediately.

“Hannibal,” he says.

“Are you home yet?” Hannibal asks. His voice sounds concerned and Will realizes he was likely waiting for a call. Not that he asked for one.

“Yeah. Bringing my things inside,” Will answers. “When do you think you’ll be here?”

Hannibal sighs. “A few days.”

“Okay. You’re not leaving tonight?”

“I have a few things to take care of,” Hannibal says. “I was called by one of my associates and I have to do something for him tonight in order for him to get us fake passports.”

“Right,” Will sighs. “Can I call you back in a couple minutes?”

“Of course.”

Will hangs up and picks the box up off the ground and carries it into the house. He goes back out, shuts his car, locks it, then calls the dogs inside. He calls Hannibal back again once the front door is locked and he has a beer in hand.

“Sorry. I was outside and needed both of my hands,” Will says when Hannibal answers again. “Fake passports, then?”

“Yes,” Hannibal says. “You aren’t wanted for any crimes, and can freely leave the country all you want, but it’s just to be safe, and to not create a trail with your name on it.”

“No, no. I understand,” Will says.

“I hope you don’t mind that we are going to have the same last name,” Hannibal says quickly.

“Brothers or husbands?” Will teases.

“ *Husbands,* Will,” Hannibal answers, exasperated. That makes Will laugh.

“You better get me a ring then,” Will says.

“And why can’t *you* get *me* a ring?”

“Fine, if you want me to propose I will,” Will says. And *fuck,* that causes feelings to rise up. His stomach twists and his heart pounds, and he really can’t believe he’s discussing proposing to Hannibal.

“I believe it may be best we continue our conversation about our marriage when we are face-to-face,” Hannibal says after a second. “I have a few things I would like to discuss in regards to it. I would prefer to be able to see your face.”

“Right, okay,” Will says. “Then, um, call me when you’re almost here, okay?”

“Of course, Will,” Hannibal says. “Two or three days at most, I promise.”

“I love you,” Will whispers, barely a breath of the words.

Hannibal repeats them back, then hangs up.

Will spends the first day of the next two cleaning his house. Vacuuming rugs, the couches, washing several sets of sheets, all his towels. He buys an extra tooth brush because he doesn’t know if Hannibal is going to bring one, though he knows deep down that it shouldn’t even be a question.

Really, he’s freaking out.

He goes grocery shopping, filling his cart with every single thing he could think of Hannibal possibly wanting to cook with. Nearly buys one of every spice in the spice aisle.

On the second day, he goes into Quantico to help on some of the cases, to offer his insight where needed. Mostly he just needs something to do that isn't just waiting for Hannibal to show up. He runs a few more errands after that.

In a moment of impulse on the third day, he goes to Hannibal’s old home in Baltimore and picks the lock. He goes up to the bedroom he never actually saw before, takes in the dark blues and grays. The dust covering everything.

He goes directly to the closet and starts pulling out all of Hannibal’s suits. He finds his ties, his underwear, his socks. Cufflinks, pocket squares, watches. He takes them all.

Shoves them all into a trash bag, knowing Hannibal will likely kill him for it, but knowing Hannibal will be grateful to have it all back.

He doesn’t know why the house wasn’t sold, or why all of his things weren’t put in evidence lock up. Maybe Hannibal passed his known assets to Chiyoh when he got locked up. It’s likely. But Will is glad for it because it means he can at least return some of Hannibal’s things back to him.

He gets back into his car, the bag of Hannibal’s things shoved into the footwell of the passenger side and makes it fifteen minutes before Jack calls. And Will almost pisses himself and drives off the road, thinking he’s been found out.

“Yeah?” Will answers, attempting so sound composed, but knowing he sounds anything but.

“We’ve got another,” is what Jack says.

“Another what?” Will asks. “Hannibal?”

“Hannibal,” Jack confirms.

“I’m not coming,” Will tells him. “Sorry, but I’m not. I’m staying as far away as I can.”

“I wasn’t going to ask you to come. I just wanted to let you know,” Jack says. “Nobody we know this time, at least.”

“Well, that’s good. I’m running errands right now. Call me if you find anything out,” Will says.

“Sure thing. Stay safe, Will.”

“You, too, Jack,” Will says, and hangs up.

Forty five minutes later, he pulls up in front of his house and the dogs are already outside. He can see movement though the kitchen window and has to stop himself from running in.

He grabs the bag from the floor of the car and gets out, kneeling down in the grass to say hello to each dog before he goes inside.

Hannibal peeks his head out of the kitchen doorway, the lower half of his body still obscured behind the wall. Upper half suggests he’s in nothing but an apron, and Will drops the bag of his belongings to the floor.

“I’m doing laundry,” Hannibal says in a way of explanation. “I am also about to start making dinner.”

“Jesus Christ, Hannibal,” Will groans. “You’re killing me.”

Hannibal smiles at him, smug as all hell, and turns to go back into the kitchen, stepping further into the doorway so his bare ass is on full display for Will.

Will takes a deep breath, counts to ten, then follows Hannibal in.

“So, you're washing *all* of your clothes right now?” Will asks. He shuts his eyes so he doesn’t have to look at Hannibal’s butt, where he’s standing at the counter, facing away from Will. He knows he needs to talk first, and if he gets an eye full of that, he doesn’t know just how much talking they’re going to get done.

“I’ve been staying in hotels for a few days, and I wasn’t able to stop at my apartment before coming here, so yes,” Hannibal answers. Will opens his eyes to catch Hannibal glancing at him over his shoulder.

He turns back to look at the counter and that’s when Will spots the bottle of lube that normally occupies his nightstand drawer.

“I’m not fucking you in the kitchen,” Will tells him. “Not a chance.”

“No?”

Hannibal moves his cutting board and knife again, and leans against the counter, pushing his hips back. Will's cock twitches in his underwear, rapidly hardening just from the sight of Hannibal in his kitchen.

"Oh, hell," Will mumbles. He immediately unbuckles his belt, stalking towards Hannibal on the other side of the kitchen.

He undoes the button on his jeans, unzips them, and by then he's right up against Hannibal, hands gripping his butt cheeks because he just can't resist. He leans down and kisses the Verger brand on Hannibal's back, then pulls back entirely, taking a step away so he can push down his jeans and underwear and step out of them.

Will trails his fingers over Hannibal's ass, right to his hole, and can't stop the groan that comes out of his throat when he presses in slightly.

"You prepared yourself for me?" Will asks.

"Yes," Hannibal breathes.

"God, I love you," Will whispers. He kisses Hannibal's shoulder, then the back of his neck. Hannibal turns his face so Will can catch his lips with his own.

Will reaches for the lube on the counter, his cock rubbing against Hannibal's ass while he presses closer to the man in front of him.

"You sure you don't want to take this to the bed?" Will asks. He squeezes lube onto his hand and strokes his cock, hardening even more with the attention.

"I'm sure, Will. Please," Hannibal says. The desperation, the yearning, the pleading, all evident in his voice. He must have been waiting for Will to come home for some time now. Thinking about this exact moment for much, much longer.

He rubs the excess lubricant on Hannibal's entrance, pushing two fingers in to make sure he's really ready, then adding a third just to be safe. Satisfied, he removes all of his fingers and kisses the brand on Hannibal's back again.

"Is this in your journal?" Will asks. He grips his cock and lines up, pressing into Hannibal slowly, stretching him with just the head of his cock before pulling out and pushing in further the second time. "Me, fucking you against the counter? While you're in nothing but a fucking apron. Jesus Christ."

"Yes," Hannibal says. His word caught on a gasp as Will pushes in all the way and moves his hands to rest on Hannibal's hips. "I'm surprised you haven't read the whole thing."

"I prefer the real deal," Will murmurs. He moans against Hannibal's back, lips pressing into his shoulder as he starts a slow thrust of his hips. "Besides… I miss you a lot when you're gone, and reading it just makes me sad."

"We can- *fuck, Will,"* Hannibal moans when Will starts thrusting harder. He tries again, "We can read it together."

“Oh yeah?” Will asks. He continues to thrust, pulling moans from Hannibal’s mouth. Will releases Hannibal’s hips to pull his t-shirt over his head, now completely naked behind Hannibal.

He pulls the string at Hannibal’s waist, then the one at his neck, letting the apron fall to the floor. He runs his hands up Hannibal’s sides, then back down, gripping his hips for leverage. He’s getting close, but he doesn’t want this to be over. Not yet.

“Hannibal,” Will whispers. He pulls out, and Hannibal looks over his shoulder to see why. “Bed. Please.”

Hannibal nods and loosens his tight grip on the counter’s edge, taking the hand Will extends toward him. Will pulls him toward the living room, then over to the bed, and pushes Hannibal down onto his back. Hannibal spreads his legs for Will, who gets between them and pushes them up toward Hannibal’s chest.

“You’re flexible,” Will comments.

“Yes, I've always been rather limber,” Hannibal agrees.

Hannibal arches his back when Will pushes back into him. Will lets go of Hannibal’s thighs letting his legs fall back down, and Will leans forward so he can kiss Hannibal’s mouth.

“Love you,” Will says against his lips. “Never leave me.”

“Will,” Hannibal breathes, lifting his head to kiss Will again. His arms make their way around Will’s back, pulling him as close as possible while Will continues to move inside him.

“When we-” Will starts, but cuts himself off with a moan. He tries again, voice breathy while he tries to make it through his request. “When we leave, I don’t give a shit about the FBI or keeping myself seemingly unassociated with you. Find a way that we can get married.”

“Will,” Hannibal whispers again, like it’s the only word his lips can form. There are tears filling in his eyes while he looks up at Will.

“With our real names,” Will clarifies. “I want to be married to Hannibal Lecter, not one of your aliases.”

Hannibal nods and closes his eyes, then wipes at his cheeks. Will leans down to kiss his forehead. He feels his orgasm building up again, knows he won’t last much longer. He takes Hannibal’s cock in his hand, stroking him in time with his thrusts.

It doesn’t take long before Will is coming inside Hannibal with a shout. He bites into Hannibal’s shoulder while he fucks Hannibal through his own orgasm. The bite seems to do it for Hannibal, too, and he comes in Will’s hand, between their stomachs, repeating Will’s name, over and over.

Will kisses Hannibal once, then again, then both of his cheeks, and his forehead. Hannibal laughs and Will wants to live inside the sound of it. So warm, so fond, so *loving.* Will kisses

him again before pulling out and laying on the bed next to him.

They both take a minute to catch their breath, laying on their backs, staring at the ceiling. Will reaches out into the space between them and searches blindly for Hannibal's hand. When he finds it, they lace their fingers together.

"Did you mean it?" Hannibal asks after a few minutes.

"Mean what?" Will asks. He lets go of Hannibal's hand so he can roll over on his side and prop himself up on his elbow. Hannibal turns his head just enough to look at him, eyes still watery.

"You want to marry me?" Hannibal asks. " *Me?"*

"Yes. I meant every word," Will assures him. He climbs off the bed and goes to his dresser before Hannibal can say another word, or ask another question.

He pulls out a small black box from his underwear drawer and brings it back to the bed. He sits down and holds out his hand for Hannibal to take, pulling him into a sitting position.

"I said I would get you a ring," Will reminds him. He opens the box and holds it out for Hannibal to see. Will looks down at the two rings nestled inside it, and pulls out the larger one, then takes Hannibal's hand again, sliding it onto his ring finger on his left hand.

He can see Hannibal stop breathing, can feel the tremors in his hand while he holds it in his own. Will brings Hannibal's knuckles to his lips and places a kiss on the ring.

"You know my ring size?" Hannibal asks.

"You were wearing a ring when you were processed. I may have stolen it from evidence yesterday to find out," Will shrugs. Hannibal looks at him, concern written across his face and Will shakes his head. "I returned it last night. No one knows it was ever gone."

Hannibal nods, then takes the box from Will and removes the other ring. His hands shake while he slides it onto Will's finger. He brings Will's hand up to his lips to kiss the ring, just as Will had done to him.

"Come on, let's shower, then make dinner," Will says. He leans forward and kisses Hannibal's lips once before climbing off the bed again and offering his hand.

"I saw you went grocery shopping," Hannibal says when he gets up. "Did you do that because I was coming?"

"Yes," Will answers. "You're staying for a few days, right? I figured if I have everything then neither of us have to leave."

"I will stay for a few days, yes," Hannibal answers. He follows Will to the bathroom and Will turns on the shower, letting it warm up before either of them step in. "What was that bag you were carrying?"

“Hm?” Will hums. He remembers the discarded garbage bag full of Hannibal’s clothes and he smiles. “Oh. I went to your house.”

“In Baltimore?”

“Yes. I took all the clothes I could fit in one bag,” Will tells him. “I wasn’t sure what your current clothing situation is, but I’ve only seen you in jeans and t-shirts.”

“That is all I have been wearing, yes,” Hannibal nods. “While I’m in the area, I can’t very easily go to my tailor. When we leave I will be able to indulge myself, but I haven’t been able to since my escape. Thank you for doing that for me, darling.”

“You’re welcome,” Will says.

They shower together, washing each other’s hair and soaping each other up. Will hopes this type of thing lasts for the rest of their years together. This casual intimacy, this trust between them.

They dry off and leave the bathroom in just towels. Will lets the dogs inside finally, and they go lay down in their beds.

“What are the new ones' names?” Hannibal asks, glancing over at the dogs.

“Lab is Gimli, Saint Bernard is Dallas,” Will answers.

“Gimli?” Hannibal asks. “Like the Tolkien character?”

Will pauses, looks at him, then says, “Yes.”

“I don’t just read classical literature, Will. *And* I watch movies sometimes,” Hannibal says.

“I believe you,” Will tells him. He picks up the bag that was left on the floor by the door and brings it over to his bed.

He dumps the bag out on the mattress while Hannibal stands behind him.

Hannibal wraps his arms tightly around Will’s middle and kisses underneath Will’s ear, then buries his face in Will’s neck. He murmurs, “Thank you.”

They stand like they for a few minutes, Hannibal obviously overwhelmed by the gesture, likely overwhelmed by everything that has happened since Will walked in the door earlier. Will lets Hannibal cling to him, places his hands over Hannibal’s on his stomach.

“Alright,” Will says after a while. He pats Hannibal’s hand. “Cmon, baby. Get dressed.”

Hannibal kisses his neck once before letting go and stepping around Will to actually look at the clothes piled up on the bed.

Will goes to his own drawers and pulls on a pair of boxers, and then his nicest slacks and a black button down. He figures he and Hannibal deserve a nice dinner. Nice clothes will make

it feel more romantic than grease stained jeans and a worn flannel.

Mostly, he just wants Hannibal to have a sense of normalcy, to be able to pretend he's not a fugitive, to pretend he and Will are eating together as they did so many years ago. Will didn't mind dressing up for him back then, and now he has even more reason to do it.

He turns and sees Hannibal holding a sweater to his face, rubbing his cheek against the soft cashmere. Will feels a pang of guilt at the sight, knowing how Hannibal has been deprived of everything for three years now.

"I have a few safe houses around the United States," Hannibal says. "They all have clothes there, but-" he shakes his head. "It's nice to have the things back that I have actually worn, and that I have missed so dearly. They feel like mine. Nothing else has. That's why I don't even bother dressing in them. Or dressing nice, at all, for that matter."

Will walks over to him and stands behind him, running his hands up and down Hannibal's arms. He's not great at comforting people, he knows that, but this seems to work just fine. Hannibal leans back against him and sighs. He's no closer to getting dressed than he was before Will started getting dressed himself, but Will can't blame him for needing time.

"Pick something for me, darling," Hannibal requests. His voice shakes just enough for Will to catch, and Will turns him around to pull him into his arms. Hannibal grips the back of Will's shirt tight, pulls Will as close as he possibly can. It's a moment of complete vulnerability, and Will can't believe Hannibal is entrusting him with these emotions.

"You're okay," Will murmurs. Hannibal just nods and clutches Will tighter before letting go and stepping away completely.

Will lets him retreat, lets him pull his walls back up and mask his emotions. He knows it's how Hannibal deals with things and vulnerable moments are not something he's used to. Will picks up a pair of Hannibal's underwear and tosses them to him, then looks back down to start matching suit pieces together.

He ends up giving Hannibal a blue and black plaid suit, along with a black button down and a blue waistcoat. He offers a tie, but Hannibal shakes his head. He doesn't put on the suit jacket either, opting to only wear the pants, shirt, and waistcoat. He rolls the sleeves up to his elbows, all the while not saying a single word. Will just watches him sink back into the persona he used to wear when they first met.

It's oddly comforting, and yet it feels so dangerous at the same time.

When Hannibal was manipulating him and letting his brain burn, this is how he dressed. When he was visiting Will in prison, when Will was manipulating him back afterward. Even so, it gives Will that odd comfort, because even when he was being taken advantage of by Hannibal, the man was still his best friend.

Will just shakes the associations and smiles at Hannibal. Smiles at his *fiancé.* Hannibal smiles back. It's a small smile, but Will can feel how genuine it is.

They both go into the kitchen and start making dinner. Hannibal stands behind Will at the counter, instructing him on how to cut the tomatoes for the spaghetti sauce Hannibal wants to make. Will knows how to dice a damn tomato, but he enjoys the feeling of Hannibal, warm against his back, whispering in his ear.

When they finally sit down to eat, Hannibal seems to be more himself. Not wearing his carefully constructed person suit, but no longer overwhelmed by emotions either.

“Do you ever think we should… discuss our past?” Will asks after a while.

“Do you want to?”

Will thinks about it for a second and shakes his head. “Can’t change it. It hurts to think about, so no. I don’t want to unless you think it would be good for us. I’ve forgiven you.”

“Perhaps we think about our future, then, instead of dwelling on the past. ” Hannibal suggests. “If you do ever wish to discuss past events, then by all means, we can. Not tonight, I don’t think.”

“Not tonight,” Will agrees.

He knows one day he wants to talk about Abigail. About the family they could have been. About Florence, and about the night Hannibal was down on his knees in the snow. He'll want to eventually. And he knows Hannibal likely has a long list of things he wants to discuss as well.

Not yet, though. Instead, Will reaches across the table and takes one of Hannibal’s hands in his own. They eat like that, needing each other’s touch, but not wanting to admit it with words.

Chapter End Notes

lmk what you think :) more to come soon

# Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

> A longer chapter to make up for the fact that it took longer than normal. Please leave comments letting me know what you think!

“Where do you want to go first?” Will asks while they wash dishes side by side. Will hands Hannibal another plate to dry and set aside. “When we leave. Where do you want to take me?

“I do have a house being built for us. I told you that,” Hannibal says.

“You haven’t told me where,” Will sighs.

“Wouldn't you like for it to be a surprise?”

“I don’t like uncertainty.”

“Can you trust me for a little while longer?” Hannibal asks.

Will finds himself nodding, unable to say no when the tone in Hannibal’s voice is pleading. He doesn’t know why Hannibal still feels the need to hide the information from him.

Then it hits him that Hannibal still doesn’t quite trust him.

He doesn’t mention it.

Instead, he says, “I want you to take me to Florence one day.”

“Then I shall,” Hannibal says. “Paris, too.”

“Would you ever go home? To Lithuania?” Will asks.

“Maybe with you,” Hannibal says. “With you, I think I could.”

Will nods and reaches out to give Hannibal’s hand a squeeze, then goes back to washing dishes.

When the dishes are clean, they sit on the couch. Hannibal leans into Will’s side, and Will wraps an arm around his shoulders, pulling him in close.

Hannibal picks up the journal from the coffee table and starts flipping through the pages until he stops on one of a drawing.

Of course it's the drawing depicting what they did earlier. Will is holding the string of the apron, his hips flush to Hannibal's ass. An expression of ecstasy on his face. Hannibal's own face is facing away, his hands gripping the edge of the counter. Will is standing up on his toes a bit to accommodate their height difference.

Will feels himself starting to get hard while he looks at the drawing, simultaneously thinking about how he fucked Hannibal like this not even a few hours earlier.

He's about to cross his legs, to force his oncoming erection to back off, but Hannibal grabs his knee before he can, forcing Will to put it back where it was, and palms Will's cock with his other hand.

A moan catches in Will's throat and he drops his head back against the backrest of the couch. When it's clear Will isn't going to try crossing his legs again, Hannibal takes the book out of Will's hand and flips to another page.

"Read this," Hannibal murmurs. He then slips off the couch and to his knees, situating himself between Will's legs. Will looks down at him, holding the book off to the side so he can watch the real thing instead.

Hannibal shakes his head and doesn't make any move to unzip Will's pants. "Read."

"Or what?" Will asks, raising an eyebrow.

"Or I won't let you come," Hannibal says simply.

"Then I'll jerk myself off," Will shrugs. He starts to stand up off the couch, making it seem like he's going to go to the bathroom, but Hannibal grabs his thighs and pushes him back.

"Fine. Fine," Hannibal says. He undoes the button on Will's pants, then pulls down the zipper, but doesn't touch more. "Don't read it, then."

"Oh, I'll read it, Doctor Lecter," Will says. He leans forward and kisses Hannibal on the lips, then sits up straight again. "We can do it your way. Carry on, I guess."

Hannibal smiles, satisfied, and lowers his face to nuzzle Will's cock through his underwear. Will groans, places a hand in Hannibal's hair, but doesn't push or pull him. He tries to focus on the words on the page but it's hard to when Hannibal is kissing the head of his cock through his boxers.

Hannibal glances up at him and Will realizes he wasn't even looking at the journal, but rather too focused on Hannibal. Hannibal pulls away entirely from Will, causing Will to groan impatiently.

"Read," Hannibal says again.

"Can I read when you aren't on your knees looking like you do?" Will asks. He drops his head back against the backrest and looks up at the ceiling. He can't believe this is his life.

"I'll let you get a head start on the entry before I touch you again," Hannibal offers.

“And if I want you to just suck me off now, and you can read it out loud to me later, instead?” Will asks.

Hannibal shakes his head and looks at the book again.

Will sighs. His cock is aching for attention, and he knows the only way he’ll get it is by his own hand, or if he starts reading the journal entry.

“It’s quite a long one,” Hannibal adds, running his hands up and down Will’s thighs. “We may be here for a while.”

Will knows there’s no defying Hannibal in this moment, but Will really does not want to fully submit to him, either. He pretends to read the journal, eyes moving along the words, trying to fake it so Hannibal will get his mouth back on him, but Hannibal shakes his head and starts to move away. He slides back, away from Will, takes his hands away from Will’s thighs.

“Where are you going?” Will asks, but he knows exactly why Hannibal is retreating. “Fine, look, I’m reading.”

“Read it out loud to me, darling,” Hannibal murmurs. He pats Will on the knee and then uses it as leverage to pull himself off the floor. “I’ll be right back.”

Hannibal walks around the couch and Will follows him with his eyes, craning his head to watch him here he stands by the bed. He picks up a pillow, then opens the nightstand drawer to retrieve the bottle of lube that was put back in there before they started cooking dinner. Will raises an eyebrow when Hannibal comes back, but Hannibal’s face makes no indication of his intentions.

The pillow gets set on the ground between Will’s spread feet, then the lube gets set on the coffee table. Hannibal sinks back down onto his knees on the pillow, and Will knows they’re actually going to be here for a while.

“We can reposition,” Will offers, looking down at him. “I can sit with my legs on the couch and you can lay between them?”

Hannibal shakes his head. “This is just fine.”

He leans forward and kisses Will’s shaft through his underwear, and Will has to stop himself from pushing up to get more. Hannibal mouths him through the fabric, then dips his thumbs under the waistband of his boxers and kisses each hip bone.

Hannibal pulls Will’s cock out of his underwear and starts to stroke him with a featherlight touch. Teasing. Hannibal pushes Will’s shirt up and moves forward, his mouth finding the scar across Will’s abdomen, leaving kisses across the length of it. Will squirms, and doesn’t know if he wants to push Hannibal away or pull him closer.

“You do not know how relieved I was to find you had survived this,” Hannibal whispers. “It was my intention, but… there was so much that could have gone wrong. I was careless with you.”

“You could say that again,” Will murmurs, breathing out a laugh.

He feels hot tears on his lower abdomen, mixing with each kiss. Hannibal can’t seem to get enough, nuzzling and kissing Will’s stomach. His hand on Will’s cock has been moved away, both hands holding Will by his flanks. He knows this moment is too important to become impatient over, but he doesn’t want to relive that night right now. He’s done enough of that in his nightmares, and in so many waking moments when he was alone and *lonely.*

“Hannibal,” Will whispers.

Hannibal clears his throat and pulls away, giving Will a tear-streaked smile, as if he is completely fine. “I apologize. I got carried away.”

As if none of that happened, he takes Will in hand again, and lowers his face, licking a stripe up WIll’s cock, from base to tip. He leaves another kiss on the head of Will’s cock, looking up at Will as he does so. Will sees his eyes flicker to the book, held in one of Will’s hands.

Will sighs and looks down at the page again. He doesn’t want to read aloud, but then he has a thought flit through his brain about how his dick is about to be sucked by a prolific cannibal, and he decides to play it safe and do as the man says.

With a deep breath, he begins to read the entry, heating rising on his cheeks. Hannibal has a hand gripped around him, but doesn’t move it, nor is his mouth doing much more than breathing on him.

“ *Will has always bent over backwards to please those around him,”* Will starts. He tries to keep his voice level, exuding little interest.

Hannibal still just watches him through his light eyelashes. Dark brown eyes, pupils blown wide with desire. His lips are parted, and his eyes keep drifting down to Will’s cock, as if he’s desperate to put his mouth on him.

Will continues, *“He never puts himself, nor his own needs, first. I am certain this extends beyond running himself ragged in the field. Beyond contorting himself into every single killer along the East coast, and then some, just to save a handful of meaningless lives. I’m certain if a case called for it--* Fuck, Hannibal,” he groans when Hannibal takes Will into his mouth. He feels the head of his cock hit the back of Hannibal’s throat and lets out a loud moan, one that causes the dogs to lift their heads from where they sleep on the floor.

Hannibal pulls back so he can suck at the head of Will’s cock, then takes him deeper again. Will puts his free hand on Hannibal’s head, fingers curling into his hair. The journal is nearly forgotten in his hand until Hannibal removes his hand from where it lays on Will’s thigh, and taps the page with a finger.

Will can’t stop the impatient whine in the back of his throat, but knows he is seconds away from Hannibal pulling away, so Will keeps reading, his voice catching on moans as he does.

*“I’m certain if a case called for it,”* Will repeats. *“that Will would immediately come back to the FBI, no matter how comfortable he thinks his life may be.”* Will looks down at Hannibal,

pulls him up by his hair, his cock slipping from Hannibal's mouth completely, then asks, "Does this get sexual, or are you just going to call me a pushover for six pages?"

Hannibal smiles up at him, entirely amused. He clears his throat twice before speaking. "I assure you that is not the point."

"Can I just read it in my head?" Will asks.

Hannibal shakes his head. "You have already proven I cannot trust you to do that, love. Read it to me, darling. I want to hear the way your voice catches, the way you can't get through words because I'm making you feel good."

"Fuck, fine, okay," Will says. He finds it increasingly hard to say no to Hannibal, so he keeps reading. Hannibal doesn't immediately take him back into his mouth yet, and Will knows he's not going to be able to come for a while at this rate.

*"I am certain this trait of Will's carries on into the bedroom—* Ah, there it is," Will laughs. *"I am sure he's a very generous lover, always putting the needs of his partner above his own. Always putting their pleasure first."*

Will takes a pause just as Hannibal takes him back into his mouth. He caresses Hannibal's cheek with his free hand, then moves it down to cup Hannibal's jaw lightly while Hannibal sucks him. He moves his hand away so Hannibal can bob his head up and down.

"Do you think that now? Now that you've had me in bed with you?" Will asks quietly. He doesn't wait for Hannibal to pull off and answer before he continues to read, his voice not quite right, gasping and moaning quietly, trying to keep it together.

*"Which is why I would like to turn the tables for him. Give him everything he needs, and not let him think of giving me anything in return,"* Will reads. He groans at both the words, and how Hannibal's mouth is bringing him closer and closer to the edge. Hannibal seems to notice how close Will is getting and pulls off again, sitting back on his heels.

"You ass," Will mutters. "Why did you bring the lube over?" he asks conversationally, dropping his head to rest against the backrest again.

"I intend on riding you on the couch at some point," Hannibal shrugs.

"You can fuck me, you know," Will says. "Whenever you want."

Hannibal nods, and looks like he's storing this information away for later. He doesn't comment on it, though, as if he doesn't want to lose whatever goal he's working toward tonight.

"To answer your question, yes," Hannibal says after a second. "I do think you are very focused on me, rather than yourself. Our first time, especially. You enjoy it that way, though."

"My partner's pleasure is often my pleasure," Will shrugs. "Which also means, on the other end I am fully aware of their boredom, as well. Easier to keep them pleased, as that pleases me, than to underperform and disappoint both of us. My empathy picks up on everything."

“Did your wife ever seem bored?” Hannibal asks. He takes Will’s cock in hand again, stroking slowly.

“No because I made sure she wouldn’t be,” Will sighs. “Don’t get jealous, Hannibal.”

“I’m not. I’m simply asking. We have ended up here regardless of your past partners, have we not?”

That takes Will by surprise. After so long of Hannibal wanting Will to have no one beside him, it throws him off entirely that Hannibal would be so calm and accepting about Will’s past. He wonders if Hannibal is just learning his lessons now, knowing Molly is no threat to their relationship.

Instead of answering the question, Will leans down and kisses Hannibal.

“Can I touch you?” Will asks. He pats his thigh, fully intending for Hannibal to climb into his lap. “Come up here.”

“This is about you, Will,” Hannibal tells him, his voice firm, his hand gripping Will tighter, moving a bit faster.

“It’s not,” Will laughs. “If this were about *me* then you wouldn’t be making me read this out loud while you try to edge me.”

“I need you to read that,” Hannibal says. “There are things I would like to try, but I want you to read it so you can tell me if you would be agreeable.”

“You know I have barely retained a single word,” Will says. He moans, getting close again, trying to keep himself composed while his orgasm builds up, so he doesn’t indicate to Hannibal that he’s close. He is really hoping Hannibal doesn’t notice and brings him to completion, but *of course* Hannibal fucking notices and draws his hand away.

“You may read it in your head for a few minutes. Touch yourself if you want,” Hannibal says. He stands up from the floor, his own erection visible through his pants, bulging to get out of the fabric restraints, completely ignored. He walks across the room on careful feet, his knees obviously hurting from kneeling. Will watches him until he’s in the kitchen, then looks down to the page.

He sighs, then decides he is not having this anymore, and throws the book aside, onto the table next to the couch. He strokes himself slowly while he waits for Hannibal to come back, and when he does, he’s drinking a glass of water.

“You’re not reading,” Hannibal points out.

“No. I’m not. Come here,” Will says. Hannibal doesn’t move from where he stands in the doorway, just watches Will. “A compromise, okay? Come here, and let me take care of you, then I’ll read as many pages as you want me to. You’ve had your fun with this, now it’s my turn. You still want to ride me, right?”

Hannibal sighs, nods, and walks over to Will, setting the glass down on the coffee table, then standing between Will's legs.

Will unzips Hannibal's pants, and pushes them down along with his underwear, then taps Hannibal's calf so he'll step out of them. He lifts his own hips, pushing his own down and taking them off too, then starts unbuttoning his shirt.

"You're trying to take this dominant role, and make me submit, but good luck with that, Hannibal," Will laughs quietly. He tosses his shirt aside, then looks up at Hannibal. "Could be fun, if you weren't so goddamn annoying about it."

Hannibal looks down at him with a frown on his face, but Will can tell he's trying not to smile. Will grins up at him then wraps his hands around Hannibal's hips to pull him down into his lap. Hannibal's knees end up on either side of Will, and their cocks slide against each other. Hannibal lets out a moan, finally getting some friction after being hard for so long.

"I love you," Will whispers, burying his face in Hannibal's neck. "But if you want to try something, just talk to me about it instead of making me read the journal."

"Very well," Hannibal sighs.

Will's hands make their way to the buttons of Hannibal's waistcoat and start to undo them, pushing it over his shoulders, then moving to his shirt.

Hannibal's shirt gets discarded and Will kisses across Hannibal's collarbone, then moves up to his throat.

"I'll admit that it's just easier for you to read what I have written, instead of me explaining it," Hannibal says after a while.

"You've never had a problem with talking, Doctor Lecter," Will says, smiling against Hannibal's neck. He holds Hannibal around the waist with one arm, then reaches forward to pick up the lube from the coffee table. He kisses Hannibal's throat one more time, then says, "Tell me about it."

Will squeezes lube onto his fingers, then reaches under Hannibal to rub his entrance with one finger. He pushes one finger in, sliding in easily. Hannibal drops his head down on Will's shoulder, and pushes down onto his finger.

"We discussed it briefly on the phone," Hannibal says. Will pushes in another finger, causes Hannibal to gasp and grind down onto Will's hand. "I would like to tie your hands to the bed frame."

"Mhm, why is that?" Will asks, working his two fingers in and out of Hannibal's body.

"Will," Hannibal breathes out. It sounds like a protest, like he doesn't want to keep talking.

"It's okay, we'll talk about it later. You're doing so good for me," Will murmurs. He rubs his free hand up and down Hannibal's back, then adds a third finger. His wrist aches from the

way his hand is positioned under Hannibal's body, but he continues to stretch Hannibal, drawing moans and gasps from his lips.

Hannibal practically whimpers when Will finally pulls his fingers out.

"Are you ready for me?" Will asks.

Hannibal nods, reaching for the lube, adding some to his hand, then wraps that hand around Will's cock, slicking him up. He puts his forehead against Will's and slowly lowers himself down. Fully seated, Hannibal waits, and presses his lips to Will's, kissing him deeply. One of Will's hands finds Hannibal's hair and his fingers tangle in the long strands. His other hand grips Hannibal's hip.

"I love you," Hannibal whispers when he pulls away. He starts to slowly roll his hips in Will's lap. He looks into Will's eyes when he adds, "More than anything, Will."

Will groans and kisses him again, and again, then buries his face in Hannibal's neck and tries not to *cry* because how did they end up here? Engaged, in love, with Will buried deep inside Hannibal's body.

Hannibal starts moving faster, lifting himself higher, and sinking down hard. Will bites into Hannibal's shoulder and Hannibal moans loud, so Will bites a bit harder. One of Hannibal's hands holds the back of Will's head, keeping him where he is, encouraging to bite again, so Will does.

He lifts his head then, barely glances at the bloody marks before looking at Hannibal's face. Hannibal looks at him with fire in his eyes, learning forward to kiss him hard. When he pulls away, there's blood on his lips, and down his chin.

Will can't resist himself, and wraps his arms tight around Hannibal's waist so he can stand just enough to turn and lay Hannibal down on the couch. Hannibal clutches at his shoulders while Will starts to fuck him hard. His legs are tight around Will's waist, keeping them close.

"So good, baby," Will says into his neck.

Hannibal whispers Will's name, over and over, once again unable to say anything else, it seems. How Will can render Hannibal stupid is beyond him. Always so eloquent and composed, he's a babbling mess underneath Will, crumbling into a million pieces with each hard thrust.

"How did we get here?" Will muses. "Who would have thought?"

"It took us quite some time," Hannibal responds, gasping and moaning while he tries to talk.

Will laughs and slows his thrusts. He lifts his head so he can look down at Hannibal. His mouth hangs open and his hair is a mess, falling in every direction. His pupils are wide, and his eyes are watering.

"I'm not hurting you, am I?" Will asks.

Hannibal shakes his head, and Will understands. Hannibal still can't believe they're here together, that Will loves him, and is being good and kind to him. Will pushes Hannibal's bangs out of his eyes and kisses his forehead.

He's about to kiss Hannibal's lips again when his phone starts vibrating on the floor in his pants pocket. He slows his thrusts and they both look down at the garment that is now moving across the floor from the vibrations. Will looks back to Hannibal and resumes their previous pace, ignoring the phone on the floor. Whoever it is can wait.

Hannibal swallows hard, then asks, "Are you going to answer that?"

Will shakes his head. "No, don't worry about it."

"It might be Jack. You should answer it," Hannibal says.

"While we're having sex? No."

Hannibal reaches down and digs the phone out of Will's pants pocket.

"I'm pulling out and *leaving* if you answe-" Will starts, cutting himself off when Hannibal hits accept on the call, which *is* Jack, after all. Will freezes, looking down at Hannibal who just shrugs and puts the call on speaker.

"Will, you there?" Jack asks.

"Yeah, I'm here. What's up?" Will asks, deciding to just get this over with. He doesn't pull out, but he doesn't dare move, either. Neither of them need to be making noises, like the ones they've been making, while on the phone with Jack Crawford.

"So, we're in Maine," Jack says. "And the kill is actually *really* close to your ex-wife's house."

Will glares at Hannibal, and says, "Oh, really?"

"Yeah, the body's been in a nearby hotel for… two days now," Jack says. "Which worries me because you were up here this past weekend."

"You think he was up there when I was?" Will asks, trying to bite back the laughter he feels bubbling up. Hannibal looks at him with a satisfied smirk, and Will hits his shoulder playfully.

"Yeah, and since Chilton was found in New Orleans, and another victim was Freddie Lounds, we're beginning to think that these kills are *way* more aimed toward you than we thought," Jack says, nervous. Concerned.

"So what?" Will asks.

"So we want you to have protection," Jack says. And there it is, the entire point.

“He’s not going to kill me, Jack,” Will sighs. He jokingly mouths *‘Right?’* at Hannibal, which causes the man under him to smile, showing all of his sharp teeth. “Really, he would’ve just done it the night we killed Dolarhyde.”

“Well, you’re further down on his list, then,” Jack suggests. “He’s waiting to kill you.”

“I don’t want, or need protection. If he kills me, then that’s that, I guess,” Will says. “But he’s not going to kill me.”

“You don’t know that,” Jack protests.

“I know him better than anyone, you said so yourself. He has a soft spot for me, you also said that. If he comes for me, it’s not going to be to kill me.”

“What do you mean by that, Will?” Jack asks.

“I mean he’s gonna cook me a nice dinner, then probably try to whisk me away to Europe with him,” Will answers.

Hannibal nods in approval at him.

“But don’t worry, Jack,” Will adds. “If he does, I’ll tell him I need to walk the dogs while he cooks that dinner, and I’ll call you. You know I will. We’ll catch him.”

“You’ve thought about this,” Jack realizes.

Will winks at Hannibal, rolls his hips, pushing deeper inside him. “Yeah, well. Everyone should have a plan of action if the serial killer in love with them feels the need to grace their doorstep. Don’t you?”

“Well, not the in love part, but yeah you’re right. Mine’s not quite as nice as yours, though,” Jack says with a laugh. “No, I’d shoot on site.”

Will brings a soothing hand to rest on Hannibal’s cheek, telling him silently that he will *never* let that happen.

“Yeah, see, Jack? It would probably be easier to catch him if I *don’t* have protection. He’s bound to come here one day. He won’t be able to stay away from me forever,” Will says. He rolls his hips again, then says, “Hey, I have to go. The dogs need to be fed. Call me if you figure anything out, though.”

“I’ll do that. Bye, Will.”

“Bye, Jack.”

Will hangs up the phone and throws it down onto the coffee table. He starts to thrust hard into Hannibal, and leans down to bite his other shoulder, drawing blood again.

“I do not want to ever talk to Jack while I’m having sex with you ever again,” Will tells him. “Don’t pull that shit.”

“Oh, but it’s so nice to hear from him. He’s worried about you,” Hannibal says.

“And he wants to kill *you,”* Will says.

Hannibal shrugs. “I have full confidence that will not happen.”

Will laughs and kisses him, then he’s suddenly being rolled over and his body hits the hardwood floor between the couch and the coffee table hard, the pillow on the ground only barely cushioning the fall. He slipped out of Hannibal on the way down, who’s now standing above him, looking down with a fond smile. He pushes the coffee table further away, then gets down on his knees, straddling Will’s hips.

“You could’ve hurt me,” Will points out.

“But I didn’t,” Hannibal says.

He adds more lube to Will’s cock before sinking back down on it.

“You know, I think I get it,” Will says.

Hannibal raises an eyebrow, looking down while he rides Will. He rests his hands on Will’s chest, and Will covers them with his own.

“Why you want to tie me up,” Will clarifies. “Not only do you want some sort of control, but it’s like you were already trying to do tonight. Making it so I can’t even try to reciprocate. All about me.”

“Yes,” Hannibal whispers.

“Mm, yeah. You like how I’ve been taking charge, though, haven’t you?”

Hannibal nods.

“You like it a lot, but you don’t want to give me the chance sometimes. Because you know how hard it is for you to regain yourself after I turn you into a mess with just my hands and my words,” Will whispers. He wraps a hand around Hannibal’s cock, letting Hannibal thrust into it while he moves on Will’s. “You answered the phone call because you needed a second to regain your composure, so you could roll us over, and take what you want.”

Hannibal nods again. Will has him all figured out, but that’s no surprise. He’s always been the only person to really *see* Hannibal, and this is no different.

It doesn’t take much longer before Hannibal comes on Will’s stomach and hand, moaning loud, and falling forward to rest his forehead against Will’s. He clenches hard around Will, riding it out, and bringing Will over edge inside of him.

“Love you, love you,” Hannibal whispers. He repeats it three more times before pulling off of Will and standing. His breathing is heavy, and his hand shakes when he holds it out for Will.

“I love you, too,” Will says. He kisses Hannibal once they’re both on their feet, then lifts their conjoined hands to kiss the ring on Hannibal’s finger. “Always.”

Hannibal pulls Will into his arms and buries his face in Will’s hair.

“No more floor sex, though, okay? I’m too old for this,” Will laughs. “Could’ve broken a hip when you threw me on the ground like that.”

“But you didn’t,” Hannibal says.

“Not the point,” Will says. “Come on, let’s get cleaned up then take the dogs for a walk.”

“Am I joining you, or am I to stay here while you call Jack Crawford to come arrest me?” Hannibal asks.

“Oh, shut up,” Will laughs, pushing at Hannibal’s shoulder. “I’m not turning you in. Not when they could pick this place apart and find our come everywhere and know just how long I waited to call.”

They clean up, showering and taking care of the bite marks, then get dressed.

It’s dark out already, so they take the dogs out with a flashlight. Will walks them out a decent distance, holding Hannibal’s hand the entire way, then shuts the flashlight off and turns them to face the house.

“Your boat on the sea,” Hannibal breathes, realizing what Will is showing him before Will has a chance to explain.

There’s no need for explanation, Hannibal remembers the conversation, of course he does. He wraps his arm around Will’s shoulders and pulls him in close to his side.

“And does this still make you feel safe?” Hannibal asks quietly.

“Yes,” Will breathes. “But it’s not just the house.”

*It’s you.* Will lets the unsaid words hang in the air around them. He knows Hannibal understands, and knows he believes Will, too. Hannibal kisses the top of Will’s head and buries his face in his hair.

“Thank you for sharing this with me, Will,” Hannibal whispers.

Will just nods and kisses Hannibal’s shoulder, pushing his face closer, burying himself in Hannibal’s shirt.

“Are you ready to go back?” Hannibal asks.

Will nods against Hannibal’s shoulder, then whistles for the dogs to follow them back inside. They walk like that, Hannibal’s arm around Will’s shoulder, all the way back to the house.

They take the dogs in and feed them, then eat leftovers from dinner over the kitchen counter. They decide to watch TV for a while before bed, so they make their way into the living room, dogs following close behind. The dogs all curl up in their beds, settling for the night until Will has to take them out before bed.

“Hey,” Will says conversationally once they’re settled on the couch. Will sits with his back against one armrest, his legs at rent check out across the couch while Hannibal sits between them, back pressed to Will’s chest.

Hannibal turns his face just slightly, but doesn’t fully take his eyes from the TV, which Will still takes as an invitation to keep talking.

“You can’t sleep down here,” Will tells him. “I’ve been thinking all day about what would happen if someone came here while we were sleeping and saw you through a window. There’s a bed upstairs.”

“I see,” Hannibal answers. His body is stiff and his tone is short. Will realizes he wasn’t specific enough, that Hannibal thinks Will is sending him up there to sleep alone.

“And I’ll be sleeping with you,” he adds.

Hannibal relaxes immediately at the words and turns his face to kiss the space underneath Will’s ear.

“You were worried that’s not what I meant,” Will says.

“Forgive me for my stupid mistake,” Hannibal murmurs.

“Are you still unsure of my intentions?” Will asks. “Do you think this is still only sex for me? That I don’t want to sleep next to you for *the rest of my life?* Or that these rings—” Will holds up their conjoined left hands, and brings Hannibal’s knuckles to his lips, kissing the engagement ring on his finger. “—are just for show?”

Hannibal doesn’t respond, so Will wraps his arms tight around his waist.

“I love you, okay?” Will whispers. He kisses Hannibal’s neck, then his shoulder over one of the bite marks he left. “I don’t know why, but I do. You would think after everything, I couldn’t, but you know Freddie Lounds always did call me crazy. I always denied it, but apparently she was right. I denied her claim about us Murder Husbands, too, though.”

That draws a quiet laugh from Hannibal, his shoulders shaking with it.

“It’s too bad Freddie’s dead, you know,” Will murmurs. “She would have loved to photograph our wedding. Imagine how much revenue that would have brought Tattlecrime.”

“May she rest in peace,” Hannibal whispers. “It’s quite a shame that whoever killed her didn't have that foresight.”

“Yeah, well, whoever it was is an idiot,” Will jokes. He kisses Hannibal’s cheek. “You okay now?”

“Yes,” Hannibal answers. “I apologize for needing reassurance sometimes. These last few years have been difficult without you.”

“I know,” Will whispers.

“And when you had gotten engaged, Alana came by to show me the wedding invitation, then the wedding photos afterward. It was…” Hannibal trails off. “You looked very happy. I sometimes wonder how it’s possible you could move on from someone as lovely as Molly so quickly for me.”

“I didn’t move on from Molly *to* you,” Will says. “I tried to use Molly to move on *from* you . And it didn’t work. My relationship with Molly had an expiration date since the moment we met. That expiration date was always going to be whenever you found a way out of the hospital.”

Hannibal brings his hands up to his face and wipes at his cheeks. His shoulders start to shake, and Will just holds him tighter.

“Shh, you’re okay,” Will soothes.

“I’m not often emotional,” Hannibal says after a minute. His accent is thicker than normal, overcome with all the emotions he’s not used to feeling. Everything that Will brings out in him, and always has.

“It’s fine to be,” Will says. “Come on, let’s go up to bed. It’s getting really late.”

Hannibal gets up and crosses the room to pick up the backpack he brought. Will gathers clean sheets, and his pillows and blankets and carries them upstairs. He fits the sheets onto the mattress on the bed upstairs then goes back down to find Hannibal.

He's in the bathroom with the door closed, so Will keeps walking toward the kitchen to get a glass of water. He takes the dogs outside one more time, standing out on the porch, looking toward the fields.

As Will stands there, he can’t help but wonder when everything’s going to fall apart. Nothing has ever been this easy between them, and he is sure that he’s foolish to think this will actually work out. There’s no way they’ll get out of the country and have the life they want because it’s not that easy. He decides, instead, to just take it day by day. Starting with now.

He sits down in one of the wicker chairs in the corner of his porch and leans back, letting the spring air surround him. The dogs come back to the porch and sit in front of him, heads tilted in question. Buster puts his paws up on Will’s leg and sniffs at his pockets, but Will shakes his head.

“No treats, guys, sorry,” Will tells them, holding his palms out flat to show them. He needs to buy more. Or ask Hannibal if he has sausage for the dogs. Will pets Buster’s head instead, then the other three crowd into his space too, demanding head rubs.

Hannibal comes out some time later, in just a pair of boxers.The bandages have been removed from his shoulders, showing the bite marks off proudly. His face has been shaved clean, which takes Will by surprise. Hannibal had been letting his facial hair grow out, and Will figured it was necessary for disguising him, but apparently not.

“You shaved,” Will states.

Hannibal shrugs. “I prefer myself this way.”

Will nods, and stands then walks over to Hannibal. Hannibal opens the door again and the dogs walk in, followed by Will, then Hannibal comes in after. Will shuts the front door and locks it once everyone’s inside, then goes into the kitchen to lock the back door, too. Usually he wouldn’t bother, but with Hannibal here, he feels the need to protect the man as much as possible.

“You need anything?” Will calls from the kitchen. He refills his own glass of water to take upstairs.

“I’m alright,” Hannibal says from the kitchen doorway.

Will gets him a glass of water anyways and hands it to him. They take the stairs up together, the dogs opting to stay in their beds downstairs. Will sets his cup down on the nightstand, then looks at Hannibal across the bed.

“I’m going to use the bathroom, then I’ll be back up,” Will tells him.

Hannibal nods, and gets into bed on his side, the side furthest from the door. Because Will chose the side closest. Because that need to protect Hannibal will not leave him, and he knows that his own body won’t do much as a buffer should someone come busting through the bedroom door, but Will knows Hannibal likely still understands the psychology of it.

He’s glad Hannibal doesn’t ask. He really doesn’t want to explain how protective he feels, or why.

Will goes downstairs, uses the bathroom, brushes his teeth, then heads back upstairs. He shuts off the bedroom light and shuts the door when he gets into the room, but pauses. He looks at Hannibal, curled up in the center of the bed, eyes closed already.

“Are you going to stand there all night?” Hannibal murmurs, opening one eye to look at Will.

Will shakes his head and undresses down to his boxers, kicking his clothes to the corner of the room.

He gets under the covers on his side of the bed and doesn’t have time to get comfortable before Hannibal’s arms wrap tight around him and pull him to the center of the bed. Hannibal buries his face in Will’s hair and inhales.

“When you smelled me all those years ago, it wasn’t my aftershave,” Will whispers. “You could smell the encephalitis, couldn’t you?”

“Yes,” Hannibal whispers.

“What do you smell now?”

“Just you,” Hannibal murmurs.

“Hm. Good.”

Will rolls them over so he can rest his head on Hannibal’s shoulder instead. He puts his hand on Hannibal’s bare chest, then starts drawing circles with his finger.

“You have something to say,” Hannibal whispers. “What is it?”

Will doesn’t answer him right away, just keeps circling around Hannibal’s chest. He rests his hand over Hannibal’s heart and presses down to feel Hannibal’s heartbeat.

“I’ll let you tie me up, and do whatever you want to me,” Will says after a minute. “But I already told you that I need to be able to get out.”

“Of course,” Hannibal murmurs.

“Tell me what you want to do,” Will requests.

“Have you ever been on the receiving end of penetrative sex before, Will?” Hannibal asks.

Will laughs quietly. “Yes, Hannibal. Lots of times.”

“Lots… of times…” Hannibal says slowly. He sounds like he’s pondering something.

“What?” Will asks. “Did you think you’d be my first?”

“It was a thought that crossed my mind,” Hannibal admits.

“Sorry to disappoint then,” Will laughs again. He kisses Hannibal’s chest. “You’re about fifteen years too late on that.”

“A shame,” Hannibal sighs. “Tell me about him.”

“Which one?” Will asks.

“Your first.”

“Well, okay. It was a guy on the force. We dated for a while,” Will shrugs. “We were both twenty-five. Both homicide detectives. I had only been with women before him, but I always knew I was attracted to men too.”

“Was he good to you?” Hannibal asks.

“He was an asshole,” Will mumbles. He starts tracing circles on Hannibal’s chest again. “I think I spent more time blowing him than we did talking. Not that it was really a problem. It

was either sex, or talking about cases, or talking about ‘that weird thing you do at crime scenes,’ as he would say.”

“Deplorable,” Hannibal murmurs.

“Yeah,” Will sighs.

“What else?” Hannibal asks.

Will shrugs. “I don’t know. I mean, I thought I loved him at the time. Even if he was only nice half the time. I mean, now I know I didn’t love him, I just hated being alone more.”

“How do you know you love me?” Hannibal whispers.

“When him and I broke up, I got over him very quickly. We were together for a while, too. With you? We’ve gone through separation and I could never stop thinking about you,” Will answers.

“Who broke things off between you two?” Hannibal asks.

“He did. I was planning on breaking up with him… I guess I never told you the story of me getting stabbed?” Will asks.

“No.”

“Guess not. No, that day I was distracted, rehearsing my breakup speech over and over in my head. Thinking about all the terrible things he ever said to me, just to remind myself how badly I should break things off,” Will says. “And the guy who stabbed me saw that distraction, I guess. I didn’t respond with force because I thought maybe it was just better for me to die. Why bother?”

Hannibal squeezes Will around the shoulders, bringing him impossibly closer.

“So,” Will continues. He stops tracing circles on Hannibal’s chest and finds one of Hannibal’s hands to hold instead, and rests them on Hannibal’s chest. “I got stabbed, ended up in the hospital. My ex came in and broke things off. I didn’t even have to say a word.”

“While you were in the hospital,” Hannibal deadpans.

“Yeah. It was fine, I don’t care. He said he wasn’t really ready for how serious our relationship was becoming,” Will shrugs. “We were together for like two years, on and off. Mostly off, really. A few months on at the time I got stabbed. We weren’t even serious. Like I said, more sex than anything. Not that I wanted to go out on dates or anything, I mean, shit, we were two men dating in the South. Neither of us wanted to be public. Anyway, not the point. So he said he didn’t want a serious relationship, which was fine with me, but it’s kind of funny, actually, because he ended up dating this girl about two weeks later, ended up marrying her after six months, and they’ve been together since.”

“That is not actually funny,” Hannibal says.

“Funny to me,” Will says. “Seriously, Hannibal. I’m glad things turned out the way they did. Like you said. Who cares about our past partners if we still ended up here?”

“You’re right, darling,” Hannibal agrees.

“We got way off track, you know,” Will points out.

“Ah, yes. Well, I plan on tying your hands above your head with one of my ties,” Hannibal explains. He lifts his head to look at the bed frame and Will looks too. Hannibal grabs one of the bars in the center of the frame. “I think I’ll likely use this one to keep you in place.”

Will makes a noise in agreement then drops his head back down to Hannibal’s chest.

“I think I’d like to make you orgasm a few times before I let you go,” Hannibal says. “First, perhaps I would just use my hand on your cock.”

“Jesus, Hannibal,” Will mutters. It’s one thing to *read* Hannibal’s writing of those words, but it’s an entirely different thing to hear the words from his mouth.

“Mhm, then I would leave you for a bit, maybe I will do some reading, or start dinner, then I would make you come from just stimulating your prostate with my fingers inside you,” Hannibal continues.

Will can feel his cock twitch in his boxers. He’s stiffening just from Hannibal’s words, and he knows Hannibal can feel it against his hip.

“Then, I’d fuck you,” Hannibal whispers. “Nice and slow. I would keep you on the edge for hours. I’d make you feel better than anyone has ever made you feel. And you wouldn’t be able to do anything, but allow me to make you feel good.”

“Okay, how about we skip the first two orgasms. Just one while I’m tied up. The first time, anyway,” Will says. “I trust you, yeah. But I don’t like the idea of laying there while you wait for me to be able to get hard again.”

“Very well,” Hannibal says. “I wouldn’t want you to be uncomfortable.”

“Really? You've loved making me uncomfortable for years.”

“I liked pushing your boundaries with therapy and murder, your threshold for pain, and your ability to say no to people. This is infinitely different,” Hannibal says.

“If you say so,” Will sighs. “Should we have a safe word?”

“Perhaps. I guess you can choose.”

“Crawford.”

Hannibal laughs. “Yes. I suppose that works.”

Will laughs, too.

He doesn't remember falling asleep, but when he wakes up, he's still cuddled up with Hannibal in bed. He rubs his face into the hair on Hannibal's chest, and Hannibal rubs his back.

"Mornin," Will mumbles.

"Good morning, darling," Hannibal says. "Breakfast?"

"Mm. Yeah. Breakfast," Will responds, his voice still tired, his eyes barely open.

"You have to let go of me, then," Hannibal says.

"Yeah," Will says. Instead, he just tightens his arm around Hannibal's middle and falls back asleep.

Eventually he wakes up and Hannibal is no longer in bed with him. Will panics for a second thinking Hannibal left while he was sleeping, but he can hear noises downstairs, and can smell something cooking.

He goes downstairs, uses the bathroom, and brushes his teeth, but doesn't bother getting dressed. He finds Hannibal in the kitchen in nice pants and a button down shirt with the sleeves rolled up.

Will walks right over to him, turns him away from the stove with a hand on his shoulder and pushes up on his toes to kiss him. Hannibal kisses back for just a second before pulling away and turning back to the stove. He wraps an arm around Will's waist and turns off the burner with the other hand.

"Just in time," Hannibal smiles. He separates the protein scramble between two plates and hands one to Will.

They both sit down across from each other at the table and eat.

"This is what we had-" Will starts.

"Our first breakfast together, yes," Hannibal says. "And now we are having it as our first breakfast together in our new life."

Will smiles down into his plate and continues to eat his breakfast.

Sometime later in the day, Will feels restless and sprawls out on the couch while Hannibal sits at one end. He flops down with his back across Hannibal's lap, then turns on his side, facing the TV, then back onto his back. Hannibal just looks away from his book and down at Will's face. Will sighs and turns on his side facing Hannibal's stomach, then groans impatiently and sits up, just staring at Hannibal for a second.

"What, Will?" Hannibal asks.

Will lays back down on the other side of the couch, and shoves his feet into Hannibal's lap, then decides he doesn't like that, either. He moves again, laying with his head in Hannibal's

lap this time, then sits up and sits across Hannibal's thighs, then just as he's about to move again, Hannibal grabs him around the waist.

"What, Will?" Hannibal asks again.

Will rests his head on Hannibal's shoulder.

"Can we go upstairs?" Will asks. He grinds his ass in Hannibal's lap to make his intentions clear.

"You're insatiable," Hannibal murmurs. But he's already standing, picking Will up in a bridal carry.

Hannibal carries him up the stairs and throws him down on the bed like a sack of potatoes. Hannibal pulls Will's shirt over his head, then pushes him to lay down. Hannibal pulls Will's jeans and underwear down with no help from Will, and starts kissing him all over. Moving from his Will's stomach, all the way up to his throat, trailing kisses along every bit of skin he can reach.

Will grabs at Hannibal, trying to unbutton his shirt, but Hannibal grabs his wrists and puts them above Will's head, holding them with one hand, while he undoes his tie with the other.

"Keep your hands there?" Hannibal asks.

Will nods, and Hannibal let's go so he can get his tie off, then he's straddling Will's chest, and looping the tie around Will's wrists and tying knots that Will can't see.

"Test that," Hannibal says after a minute.

Will tugs on it, but he's pretty secure to the bed frame so he doesn't get far.

"Do you think you can get out if you need to?" Hannibal asks.

Will tugs again, checks for space between his wrists and the fabric, then nods. "Yeah, I think so."

"Excellent," Hannibal says. He gets off of Will's chest, then opens the nightstand drawer.

"Still downstairs," Will says.

Hannibal leans down to kiss him then leaves the room. He comes back a minute later with the lube and gets back onto the bed, in between Will's spread legs.

"You're still fully dressed," Will complains.

"Don't worry about me just yet," Hannibal says with a smile.

He leans over Will and kisses him again as he palms Will's cock with his hand. Then he slides down Will's body and takes Will's cock into his mouth, causing Will to arch his back

against the bed and let out a loud moan. He wants to reach out and tug on Hannibal's hair, but he can't.

Hannibal doesn't stop sucking Will's cock while he uncaps the lube and drizzles it onto his fingers. He spreads Will's legs further and circles Will's hole with one finger, pressing lightly.

"Hannibal," Will moans. "Please."

Hannibal hums around his cock and pushes one finger inside Will slowly. It's been a while since Will's done this and he has to remind himself to relax, which isn't easy when a cannibal has his mouth on his dick.

"Hannibal, come up here," Will says.

Hannibal lets Will slide out of his mouth, and moves up Will's body, kissing each scar he can find, then his lips. He works another finger into Will, and Will moans into his mouth.

"Does your ex still work for the New Orleans Police Department?" Hannibal asks.

"No, why?" Will asks. Hannibal's fingers find his prostate then and Will groans, subconsciously tugging on the tie again because he *really* wants to touch Hannibal.

"Just curious," Hannibal shrugs.

"No, he moved to New York City a few years ago. Works for the NYPD now," Will says.

Hannibal kisses him again and pushes in a third finger.

"Hannibal, I'm ready. Please," Will says.

"What did you say his name was?" Hannibal asks.

"I didn't. Why do you want to talk about him? Just think about us," Will says.

"I'm just curious about the first man that got to do this to you," Hannibal shrugs. He pulls out his fingers, leaving Will feeling empty.

Hannibal just unzips his pants and pulls his cock out, adding more lube to his hand, then stroking himself a few times. He lines himself up with Will's entrance and Will lifts his hips so Hannibal can have better access. Hannibal presses the head of his cock to Will's hole, just barely pressing in.

Will doesn't think there's a lot of harm in telling Hannibal his name now, not while they're in the middle of sex, so he does just as Hannibal pushes the head of his cock into Will.

"His name is Thomas," Will says. Then decides *fuck it* and adds, "Collins. Thomas Collins."

He realizes this was a mistake because Hannibal says, "Thanks, love," kisses Will on the forehead, pulls out, and shoves his dick back into his pants, forcing the zipper and button

closed.

“What the fuck, Hannibal?” Will yells. Hannibal is out the door and running down the stairs before Will can realize what exactly is happening.

“I’ll return tomorrow!” Hannibal calls out.

“YOU ASSHOLE!” Will screams. “Why now?”

Will hears the front door open and shut and then he’s alone. He knew Hannibal would likely kill the guy at some point, but not *now.* Not while Hannibal was pressing his cock inside of Will. And Will can’t help but wonder how much of the last two days was just to get the information from Will. Just to get some name of some ex so Hannibal can prove some sort of point. Clearly the restraints were just so Hannibal could leave, and he wonders how long Hannibal’s been planning this.

He doesn’t even try to break free, just sighs, still achingly hard, lube all over his ass, completely alone. The fact that Hannibal thought he had to tie Will up in order to go kill really proves that he doesn’t trust Will *at all.* And Will just feels defeated. Rejected, even. He looks up at the ring on his finger and feels a tear slip from his eye, down the side of his face.

He just lays there for an hour before he decides to untie himself. He’s not hard anymore, the lube has dried up. He pulls on his underwear, and goes downstairs to find his cell phone. He calls Hannibal, but the phone rings, and rings, and rings.

Hannibal calls back a few hours later. Five to be exact. Will lets it go to voicemail. He does listen to the message the second it arrives.

“Hello, darling,” the message starts. Will wants to strangle him through the phone. “The NYPD does not do a very good job of protecting their officers, I must say. I thought it would take me much, much longer to find your dear Thomas, but it didn’t. So I will be on my way back to you in another hour, or so. I should arrive, sometime during the night. Please leave the door unlocked for me. I love you. See you shortly.”

Will turns off the phone, hoping Hannibal gets the hint if he tries calling back. He considers calling Jack and telling him everything, but doesn’t. He just goes to bed that night after locking all the doors.

# Chapter 10

Will is woken up by Hannibal kissing his forehead and rubbing a hand across his cheek. He opens his eyes, sits up, and pushes Hannibal away with a growl.

“Fuck you. Get out of my house.”

“I will not,” Hannibal says. He moves back to the bed and sits down on the edge, then cups Will’s cheek in his hands.

Hannibal leans forward and kisses him and Will feels powerless, unable to resist Hannibal at all. Will kisses him back, soft and slow. He comes back to himself when Hannibal starts to climb over him, and Will pulls back from the kiss.

He uses his hands, which were resting on Hannibal’s chest, to push him away again.

“Do you understand why I’m pissed at you, Hannibal?” Will asks. “Because you seem to think everything’s fine.”

“I have a surprise for you,” Hannibal says instead of answering. “Put on some shoes and come outside with me.”

“No. Leave. Go fuck yourself,” Will tells him, then lays back down and pulls the blankets over his head, willing Hannibal to leave him the fuck alone.

“Darling,” Hannibal sighs. “I have an unconscious member of law enforcement in my trunk, and I would like for you to help me.”

“Go. Fuck. Yourself.”

“Give me one more kiss before I go, Will,” Hannibal requests.

“Fine. Come here,” Will sighs.

Hannibal climbs over him, and just as he’s about to plant his knee on the other side of Will, Will brings his own up and knees Hannibal in his groin.

Hard.

Hannibal groans and his hands fly down to his crotch, and Will just barely pushes him away before he can keel over on top of him in pain. He ends up laying on his side on the bed next to Will, hands cupping his dick.

Will rolls over and pushes him to lay on his back, then climbs over him, pinning his shoulders to the bed, and hovering one knee over Hannibal’s crotch. A threat that he’ll do it again.

“Listen very carefully, Doctor Lecter,” Will says. “Are you listening?”

“Yes,” Hannibal breathes.

“If you *ever* pull that shit again, I will fucking *end* you,” Will tells him. “We aren’t playing your games anymore. Is that fucking clear?”

“Yes.”

“Are you sure? Because I’m not convinced. Just how much of this has been a lie?”

“Will.”

Will shakes his head. “Answer the question, Doctor Lecter. How much of these last two days was to get the name of one of my exes? So you could murder someone and… what? Prove your devotion by killing an asshole ex? Or… no. You wanted to show me you’re the only person that’s allowed to treat me like shit.”

“None of it was a lie, Will,” Hannibal says. He practically whimpers and Will laughs once, a loud bark of a laugh.

“Do you love me, Hannibal?”

“Yes, Will.”

“And do you want to be with me? Be my husband, my partner, my *equal?”* Will asks.

“Yes, yes, Will.”

“Then fucking act like it.”

Will gets off him then and turns on the lamp next to his bed. He finds a pair of pants to pull on, then socks and shoes.

“Well?” Will asks, looking at Hannibal. Hannibal scrambles to get off the bed, and Will’s never seen him in this state before. He looks almost terrified.

“Yes. Outside,” Hannibal nods, walking toward the front door. Will follows closely behind and stands behind the car with his arms crossed while Hannibal opens the trunk.

Inside, Will’s ex is hog tied and gagged, tape over his mouth.

“I hope you know you’re on your own with this one,” Will says after a second. “I’m not helping.”

Hannibal looks at Will, then turns back to the man in the trunk. He’s still unconscious, but for how much longer, Will has no idea.

“How did you even find him?”

“I walked into a precinct and told them I was an old friend from Louisiana who lost touch,” Hannibal answers simply.

Will knows the color drains from his face when Hannibal says he walked into a precinct. He stammers on his words, trying to regain his control on this situation.

“You… you w-what?” he asks. “How did… Hannibal, are you a fucking idiot?”

In a near-perfect Cajun accent, Hannibal says, “Don’t worry, darlin.’ They believed I was just looking for an old friend.”

“I want to kill you,” Will mutters. “I am going to kill you.”

“Are you going to help me?” Hannibal asks, voice back to his regular accent.

“No, because I’m pissed at you, and you just keep tacking on more reasons. FIgure it out,” Will says. “I’m going back to bed. Do your shit, then come back and wake me, and we’ll see if I still want to kill you.”

With that, Will goes into the house, leaving Hannibal to figure out what he’s going to do about the man in his trunk.

Hannibal was clearly hoping for another shared kill, and had he gone about it differently, Will would have happily obliged. Hannibal had to abuse Will’s trust yet again, and now Will is going to withhold that from him. Hannibal doesn’t trust Will, needs Will to prove himself, well two can play at that game.

Will goes back inside, strips himself naked and gets back into bed. The front door is left unlocked, seeing as Hannibal can just find a way in regardless. He lays in bed staring at the ceiling for close to an hour, wondering what Hannibal’s doing at that moment. Wondering how he’s going to display him. Wondering if Jack is going to call Will and tell him to be worried again.

Surely once his body is found, Thomas’s wife is going to tell the FBI about his past involvement with Will Graham. They’re going to ask for a list of Will’s exes, put Molly into witness protection, too. Then Will’s only friend left in the world will be taken from him, too.

Will wipes at the tears he didn’t realize were falling, then opens his nightstand to pull out the phone with only one number saved in it. He powers it back on and calls Hannibal.

“Yes?” Hannibal asks.

“Don’t display him,” Will says. “Please.”

“Why not?” Hannibal asks.

“Please. If you love me, you’ll leave nothing to suggest it was you.”

“The person who told me what precinct he works at will remember me coming in and asking specifically about him. Officers at his precinct will remember seeing someone standing outside his precinct just before he got off his shift. They will check cameras, and they will know,” Hannibal says. “There’s no way I can change that.”

Will sighs, lets out a shaky breath. There's nothing he can do, and he can hardly blame Hannibal for that. Except he knows he can, he just doesn't want to.

"Okay. Okay," Will says. "I'm just worried that the FBI will think you're going after all my exes."

"You fear they will take Molly away from you," Hannibal says.

"Yeah, but, yeah there's nothing you can do, so just don't worry about it," Will tells him. "Do whatever you want. I'm going to sleep."

"Goodnight, Will."

"Goodnight."

Will hangs up and turns on his side. He falls asleep at some point, and wakes again when a hand touches his shoulder.

"I'm going to shower," Hannibal whispers. "But I wanted you to know I'm here."

Will grabs Hannibal's wrist before he can walk away, and pushes the blankets off with his other hand.

"I'll come with," Will mumbles. He gets up without letting Hannibal go. A gap in the curtains shows that the sun is starting to rise, so he must have slept through the rest of the night. That also means Hannibal has been up for the entire night.

Will pulls him through the living room to the bathroom, and pushes Hannibal up against the door once it's closed. He kisses him twice, then buries his face in Hannibal's chest, and Hannibal's arms come around him.

"I don't want to be mad at you," Will says. "I'm so tired of being mad at you. But you need to give me less reasons to be mad at you."

"I will do my very best," Hannibal whispers. He kisses the top of Will's head, then lets him go.

Will turns on the water, and as it's warming up, he takes a minute to notice the blood staining Hannibal's clothes. It likely soaked through to his skin, as well.

Hannibal starts to peel off his clothes and Will steps forward, checking for signs of injury. There are bruises on his arms and legs, but other than that he looks fine. Will drags him into the shower and starts to wash blood off of his skin. Will is relieved none of it belongs to Hannibal.

"Are you staying?" Will asks.

Hannibal nods. "It should take a few days before he's found, so I will stay until tomorrow morning. I would like to be out of state by the time his body is found, though."

Will nods. “You should get some sleep.”

“Will you join me?”

“Got nothing better to do,” Will shrugs.

When Hannibal is clean, Will pulls him out of the shower and wraps him in a towel, then gets one for himself. They go into the bedroom and get into the bed and under the blankets without bothering with pajamas.

Will, despite his previous anger, seeks Hannibal’s warmth and body and snuggles as close as he can, slotting their legs together and resting his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. He lifts Hannibal’s left hand and brings it to his mouth, kissing each knuckle and the ring. He laces their fingers, and rests their hands on Hannibal’s stomach.

“I’m going to say something,” Will says, staying cautious. “And you’re not going to like it, but please hear me out.”

“Go ahead,” Hannibal murmurs.

“Stop killing until we leave,” Will whispers.

“That’s not a request you can make of me, Will. I’m certain you already know that, given the hesitation in your voice.”

“I’m not- I’m not trying to put a leash on you, or control you, or anything,” Will says quickly. “If someone threatens our safety, or if you have favors to cash in, then fine, do what you need to do. But you’re practically on a spree right now, Hannibal. You’re going to get caught.”

“You know I’m very careful,” Hannibal whispers.

“You’re not. Jack could show up here any minute to talk to me, but you’re here. You’re killing people tied to us, it won’t be hard to figure out your pattern,” Will says. “And it’s not just about you, anymore, okay? Do you get that? It’s about us, the both of us.”

Hannibal stays quiet, and Will sits up, looking down at him. He has a frown on his face, his eyes are distant, and Will knows he’s lost somewhere in thought. He puts his hand on Hannibal’s cheek, trying to draw him back, trying to show him that Will really isn’t trying to put a leash on him. He needs to show Hannibal that this has nothing to do with the lives he takes, but their life together. The one that he’s putting at risk for this killing spree he’s on.

“Hannibal,” Will says. “I love you.”

“I know, Will,” Hannibal responds. His eyes go back to their distant look, and the frown returns, and Will wants to scream at him.

Instead, he just lays down and turns away from Hannibal. Being apart in the large bed feels as though they’re in separate countries. He knew Hannibal wouldn’t like what he had to say, but he was at least hoping they could discuss it instead of Hannibal going into his mind.

Will doesn't realize tears are falling until he realizes he's shaking, too. He doesn't even bother hiding it because Hannibal is so withdrawn in his own memories he probably doesn't even notice.

After a few minutes the bed shifts and Will is being pulled back against Hannibal's chest, an arm wrapped tight around his waist. Hannibal kisses the back of his neck, then lifts his head and kisses Will's cheek.

"Fuck you," Will mumbles.

He brings his hands to his face to wipe away the tears, but he's still shaking, and Hannibal is kissing all over his neck and the side of his face. He holds him even tighter, and Will leans back into the warmth and comfort of Hannibal's body.

"Shh, Will," he whispers. "It's alright."

In that moment, Will really believes him. Really believes that it *is* alright. Because Hannibal is holding him, and comforting him, and isn't still drawn away in his mind, now recognizing that Will needs him.

"I have a few people I do need to dispose of, but I have gone over the logistics and I believe I can make it work out so the FBI does not know it's me," Hannibal whispers. "Otherwise, I can spare everyone else, I suppose."

"What?" Will asks, completely taken by surprise. "I thought you-- I-- what? You're not mad?"

"Hm? No," Hannibal answers. "I was lost in thought. I understand what you were saying to me, and you are correct."

"Well, thanks. Next time tell me you're thinking about it instead of making me think you didn't want to discuss it."

"An error on my part, I will admit," Hannibal whispers.

Will knows that is as close to an apology as he's going to get, so he takes it as one.

"Hannibal?" Will whispers after many minutes.

Hannibal makes a half-asleep "Mhm?" noise, and tightens his arm around Will's waist.

"Thank you," Will says, with all the sincerity in the world.

"I'd do anything for you," Hannibal mumbles against the back of his neck.

Will finds himself falling asleep with a smile on his face.

Sometime in the middle of the day, Will wakes with Hannibal pressed firmly to his back, breathing still even, but his cock hard against his ass. Will pushes back against him slightly, and feels Hannibal's hips push forward. Will reaches over to open his nightstand drawer and

as soon as he pulls himself away from Hannibal, the other man wakes up and reaches for him again.

Will gets the lube out of the drawer and hands it to Hannibal. He settles back into their original position, and Hannibal starts kissing his neck, and behind his ear. Will turns his head to catch Hannibal's lips with his own.

He pulls up his top leg nearly to his chest, bending his knee so Hannibal can bring one lube slicked finger to touch him, circling around his hole at first before pushing inside.

"You're actually gonna finish this time, right?" Will asks. He reaches back and strokes Hannibal's cock between their bodies as Hannibal adds another finger.

Hannibal smiles, and kisses him once more. He finishes stretching Will with his fingers and lifts Will's leg and holds the underside of his thigh, then Will feels the head of Hannibal's cock pressing into him.

It's slow and gentle, Hannibal rocking into him, kissing his neck and face. Will wonders if it's an apology for all the things between them that have been the opposite of slow and gentle. A promise to try again, to start over. He knows they can never truly start over, but he can pretend for now. Now when Hannibal is clearly trying to prove that he can treat Will with love and kindness. Will brings his hand back to cradle the back of Hannibal's head and knot his fingers in his hair.

He focuses on the warm press of Hannibal's chest against his back, the stretch of Hannibal's cock inside him, the hand on his thigh, the other arm underneath him, hand holding his chest. Safe touches, gentle hands. Hands that have shown him both love and hate. Safety and danger.

As much as Will loves him, he suddenly feels like he shouldn't have his back turned to a serial killer. It's nothing that Hannibal has done in the last few minutes, but rather the reminder that even gentle caresses can turn into blood and gore, can turn into Will watching someone he loves die, and not being able to stop it from happening. Can turn into Will being knocked out and left on a cliff edge, left alone for weeks, begging for forgiveness, and having to trick his way into Hannibal's heart. He would rather see it coming.

Will removes Hannibal's hand from his thigh and moves so Hannibal's cock can slide out of him. He rolls over so he can lay on his back and pull Hannibal over him, and Hannibal gets between his legs and slides back in.

They don't need to speak to know, Hannibal just seems to understand where Will wants him and he goes there, leaning down to kiss him. Will can feel a smile on Hannibal's lips, and knows how happy he makes Hannibal. How Hannibal never thought they'd end up here.

Will almost feels guilty for his previous thoughts.

Hannibal rests his forehead against Will's and snakes his arms under his back, holding him tight and close while he thrusts into him.

The room is filled with the sound of skin moving against skin, the sound of both of their moans. Quiet declarations of love, each other's names falling from their lips.

When they both come, Hannibal flops onto his back and pulls Will on top of him, not worrying about the mess of come on Will's stomach. Hannibal runs his hands up and down Will's back, then fingers tangle in his hair. Will kisses Hannibal's chest where his head lays, and tries not to think too hard.

The not thinking only lasts a few minutes, then it comes back full force.

He can't help it. Beverly and Abigail come to mind. He almost feels like he's betraying them both now. Beverly, who was his only friend with no ulterior motives, who genuinely tried to help him. Abigail, who was so scared and yet so brave. So trusting of people she shouldn't have been trusting of. And Will can't help but blame himself for both of them.

He gets off of Hannibal and leaves the room, then, not stopping to explain himself, just needing to get out. Hannibal calls out for him, but Will just goes right into the bathroom and locks the door behind him. He gets into the bathtub, and turns on the water, letting it fill around him.

There's pounding at the door, but Will ignores him. He pretends he can't hear anything over the sound of the water running, but he can. He can hear the concern in Hannibal's voice.

"Darling, are you alright?" Hannibal asks.

Will sinks lower into the bath water, submerging himself completely, then coming back up just a second later.

"I'm fine, Hannibal," Will responds.

Apparently that's not the thing to say because Hannibal finds the emergency key on the top of the door frame and opens the door.

Hannibal just stands in the doorway and looks at him, and Will looks back.

"Did you know I blame myself for Beverly and Abigail?" Will asks. "I mean, you're the one that killed them and yet…"

Will trails off, and sinks back under the water, staying down for longer this time. When he emerges, Hannibal is still just standing in the doorway, leaning against the frame.

"If it weren't for me, Beverly would have never gone to your house," Will says. He doesn't look at Hannibal, just down into the water at his thighs. "You thought you were going to be able to run away with me, you were going to give Abigail back to me. I knew what you were capable of and I still… I still betrayed you. I promised to keep Abigail safe and I couldn't."

He's about to go under the water again so he can't listen to Hannibal's response, but before he can, Hannibal is picking him up and pulling him out of the water. He carries Will all the way back to the bedroom, and throws him down onto the bed. Hannibal sits down a few feet away,

his legs criss crossed on the bed, his elbow resting on one knee, and his chin resting in his hand.

Will doesn't dare move from where Hannibal laid him down. He's getting the bed and his pillow soaked with bath water, but he doesn't get up to grab a towel. He just tilts his head so he can watch Hannibal. He can practically hear his thoughts, he can see the words flickering behind Hannibal's eyes while he decides what to say.

"You were a major catalyst in the death of Miss Katz, but she ultimately made her own decisions," Hannibal says after a second. "You did not send her to my house with no backup, Will. She did that herself, knowing what she could possibly find."

Will knows that. He does, but he can't really accept that. She was there because of him.

"Abigail, on the other hand," Hannibal continues. "Had to die."

Will opens his mouth to speak, but Hannibal holds up a hand and shakes his head.

"You've upset yourself, Will," Hannibal says. He picks up his watch off the nightstand. "We can discuss this later. I think lunch would be a good idea right now."

Will feels anger rising in his chest, and he wants to scream, but Hannibal walks right out of the bedroom before Will can say anything. Will follows after him, taking deep breaths as he walks down the hall, and into the bathroom for a towel.

He makes it downstairs to find Hannibal pulling on pants, then picking up a sweater to pull over his head. Will walks right past him, silent, knowing if he speaks he'll yell, or possibly cry. Probably both. Because Hannibal won't talk about Abigail, won't contradict Will about where he places the blame. *You've upset yourself,* he had said. Not *I've upset you.* Never taking the blame. Never regretting what he has done.

His drawers are running low on clothes, and he needs to do laundry, but he finds a pair of clean underwear, and a pair of jeans. He looks for a long sleeve shirt, but they're all in the laundry basket. He doesn't feel like dealing with buttons.

Hannibal somehow senses Will's dilemma and hands him a red sweater. Will thinks about tossing it back and putting on a button down afterall, but he takes the sweater and pulls it over his head. Hannibal pulls him forward and kisses him, and Will pushes him away.

"No," Will states. "No."

"Will?"

Will walks into the kitchen, knowing if he looks at Hannibal he's going to start yelling. He at least wants to give him a chance to talk.

Hannibal grabs him around the waist from behind, and Will jumps. For a split second he thinks Hannibal's going to kill him, but instead lips find his neck, and start kissing him. Will shoves him away, and turns quickly on his heel.

“Either we talk about Abigail, or you make lunch like you said you would,” Will says.

“You’re still upset,” Hannibal says. He nods in agreement with himself, it seems, and then goes to the fridge to start looking for something to make for lunch.

“I’m upset at *you!”* Will yells. “Do you get that? I didn’t make myself upset. *You* made me upset!”

“I see,” Hannibal says.

His calm voice makes Will want to kill him. How can he still be so unbothered? He doesn’t even *care* and Will thinks he’s making a huge mistake. There’s no way he can run away with Hannibal, no way he can marry him, or even continue to fuck him. Because Hannibal doesn’t care that he hurts Will. He’s barely even aware when he’s the problem.

“Do you?” Will yells. “Do you see? Because fuck, if you did, you’d ask me *why.* You’d ask how to make it better, but no! You don’t fucking care!”

“Is that what you think Will?” Hannibal asks. He sets the food down on the counter, and rests his hands on the edge. There’s an island between the two of them, but Will knows that won’t stop either of them from pulling a knife from the block only feet away from the both of them.

“I want to talk about Abigail,” Will says.

“And I do not.”

“You don’t get to decide that, Hannibal,” Will says, throwing his hands in the air in frustration. “You don’t get to say Abigail *had to die* and then not say why you think that.”

“Will,” Hannibal warns. There’s a sharp edge to the way Hannibal says his name. None of the love that was there when they were in bed. Hannibal’s patience is running thin, and Will wants to keep pushing him.

“No. No. You killed her because you wanted to prove a point to me. Because you can give, and give, but you will *always* take, and you’ll take everything. I can’t believe I fell for your shit again,” Will scoffs. He turns and starts to walk from the room, but then adds, “This has been a really bad idea. All of it. I want you to leave.”

“Abigail had to die because it was the only way I could fulfill my promise to do better by her than Garrett Jacob Hobbs did,” Hannibal calls out after Will.

“How can you say that?” Will asks, spinning around to face Hannibal.

Hannibal closes his eyes and takes a breath, and Will has a wave of regret wash over him, but it’s not his own.

“I thought you were still on the side of the FBI, Will,” Hannibal says. “I could live with you catching up to us and arresting me, but I made a promise to protect Abigail. She had to die because I would not allow her to be imprisoned. I am nothing if not a man of my word.”

“So it’s still my fault?” Will asks. As much as he tries to keep his voice steady, it shakes. Tears well in his eyes, and he wants to go lock himself in the bathroom until Hannibal leaves, but he holds his ground.

“I don’t regret many things, Will, but that night is one of them,” Hannibal says. At the admission, he turns away from Will, and Will knows that’s as much as he’s going to get. To Hannibal, that admission is everything, though, and Will knows what it took for him to say it.

Hannibal busies himself with making sandwiches from the groceries Will bought, and Will watches him, calculating his next move. He stays silent, but takes the sandwich when it’s offered to him, and sits at the table across from Hannibal.

They eat their sandwiches, and Hannibal picks up the plates and takes them to the sink. He washes them, dries them, and sets them aside. All the while, Will is watching him.

“Do you still want me to leave?” Hannibal asks.

“No,” Will answers. “Come here.”

Hannibal crosses the room to Will, and goes into Will’s open arms. Will holds him tight, cradles the back of his head.

“I knew it wouldn’t be easy,” Will whispers. “I chose you after everything, and that’s on me. I can’t fault you for being who you’ve always been. I’m not going to stop loving you for it.”

Hannibal nods and clutches at Will’s sweater.

“We’ll get through it,” Will whispers. “We can get through all of it.”

# Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Sorry for this chapter in advance. Direct all complaints to the comment section.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It only takes a few minutes before he's upset again. It is triggered by Hannibal running his fingers through Will's hair, giving him a quick kiss, then picking him up and carrying him to the bed in the living room. It's not even about Abigail or Beverly this time. It's about how Hannibal just always gets Will to calm down, how it's one caress and Will is his again. Will doesn't *want* to be his right now. He's tired of being mad, but he doesn't want to be a fucking pushover either.

Hannibal kisses him again, climbing over his body, getting between his legs, and that's when Will snaps. He pushes Hannibal away, pushing hard against his chest, and rolling out from under him. He sits up, pulls his knees tight to his chest and groans.

"Will?"

"Fuck!" Will yells. He's starting to panic a bit, his breathing is ragged, and his head is spinning. "I hate you. I hate that I can't resist you. One kiss, one hug, and I'm putty in your hands again. I can't keep doing this."

"Will--"

"No," Will says, shaking his head. "No, no. No. I do need you to leave. I really, really need you to go."

"Don't do this, darling," Hannibal whispers. He reaches out to cup Will's cheek, and Will has to resist the urge to lean into it, to forgive, to pull him close.

"If you don't leave right now I'm calling Jack," Will whispers. "Get your stuff, and leave. Please."

Hannibal just nods, and pulls his hand away from Will's face. He stands, and Will does, too, deciding to follow him around the house from afar while Hannibal collects his clothes.

They stop at the front door, and Will considers kissing him goodbye, but instead he pulls back his fist and lands a punch right on Hannibal's nose. Hannibal's hand flies to his face, and his fingers come away bloody, his nose freely bleeding.

"I likely deserved that," Hannibal says.

“Yeah,” Will agrees.

“When can I see you again?”

“Really? *Really?”* Will asks in disbelief. “I’m done, Hannibal.”

He pulls off the ring on his finger and throws it at him, then shuts the door, forcing Hannibal out onto the porch alone.

“You better get out of here. I’m calling Jack in an hour,” Will calls through the door.

“Will you come to Bedelia’s?” Hannibal asks. “It’s about five months from now.”

“Maybe I will, maybe I won’t,” Will calls back. “Maybe I just need some time to sort shit out, maybe I’ll never see you again. Just don’t get yourself caught, so I can actually have the freedom to decide. But right now, Hannibal, I am done.”

“I love you,” Hannibal says through the door.

“I know, Hannibal,” Will responds.

He hears footsteps leaving the porch, and he just sits there, head in his hands. The dogs come and lay down next to him, and Winston whines. Will knows he made the right choice, the safe choice, but his chest hurts. Like Hannibal cracked it open, removed his heart, and took it along with him. Leaving a gaping hole that Will is never going to be able to fill with anyone or anything except for Hannibal.

Will pulls out his cell phone and hits dial.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Molly,” Will says. “Can I drive up and stay for a few days?”

“Sure, did something happen?” Molly asks.

“Ah, yeah, I,” Will starts. He takes a shaky breath. “Yeah, we kinda, ah, broke up, I guess?”

“Alright. Yeah, you can stay as long as you need,” Molly says. “When can I expect you?”

“Late tonight. I’m gonna get the dogs packed up and some clothes, then I’ll start the drive.”

“Okay,” Molly says. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Will says. “I mean, no. I’ll be fine.”

He tells her he’ll be leaving soon and hangs up. He doesn’t call Jack, not like he told Hannibal he would. He had thought for a minute he would call Jack, tell him Hannibal was there, but decided against it, unsure if they’ll send a forensics team into his house. Hannibal’s prints and semen being found all over his kitchen, couch, and beds probably won’t look too good for himself.

The dogs get into his car and Will tries not to think too hard about Hannibal. He made the right decision, but he feels so empty about it. Just days ago they were doing so well. Will had *proposed,* but he knows it was never sustainable. Even if they get out of the country, which doesn't seem likely at all, they're just going to end up killing each other.

Before Will pulls out of the driveway, he decides to run back inside and grab the journal from his coffee table. Maybe he'll have Molly take a look at it and they can laugh about it. Because *surely* it's pathetic to write erotic stories about yourself and a man you've never even kissed. Will lets himself laugh quietly at the entire concept of it as he drives. Seriously, it's ridiculous. Will had rejected Hannibal multiple times, yet Hannibal was always so hung up on him. Maybe if he would have just told Will about his feelings instead of trying to kill him, Will would have reacted differently.

Instead, Hannibal had to rely on writing erotica about him while he was in prison. And he wouldn't have even been on Will's radar if he hadn't framed Will for multiple murders. Well, he would have been on Will's radar, but not in the way he was. Will wouldn't have led the investigation against Hannibal if Hannibal came forward sooner, and didn't betray all of his trust for him. If Hannibal had only told Will how he feels, been truthful to him about his proclivity for murder, Will thinks he would have accepted him a lot sooner.

*God, we are bad at communication,* Will thinks with a sad smile.

Winston sits in the passenger seat, and the other three sit in the backseat, all curled up and sleeping during the long drive. Will pulls over a few times on the way to let the dogs out, and to stretch his legs. Every time, he thinks about calling Hannibal and apologizing for sending him away, for quite literally breaking up with him.

*No, no, no. No.*

Will knows he made the right choice, he does. He's going to move on. Either to someone, or somewhere else. Maybe he'll move away, away from things that remind him of Hannibal, just like he tried to three years ago, but maybe this time he won't settle down with someone new. Because no one would understand him, and his relationship with Hannibal.

And because no one else will *be* Hannibal.

Will can try filling the void with one-night stands and casual relationships, just something to make him less lonely, but he will *never* be able to love someone the way he loves Hannibal. He will never be able share his life, or his mind, with anyone else in the way he has always desired to do with Hannibal.

No one will ever be Hannibal, but that doesn't mean Will can't… do what he wants.

He arrives at Molly's late in the night, but the lights are still on, and she answers the door when he pulls up.

"You didn't have to wait up for me," Will says, carrying his bag in and setting it on the couch. The dogs reunite, sniffing each other, then sniffing Will.

“Figured you might not want to be alone,” Molly shrugs.

She goes into the kitchen and brings back two mugs of hot chocolate. Will sits on the couch and takes a mug from her, and she sits next to him, a cushion between them.

“Yeah, so,” Will shrugs. “I made him leave because I can’t do it.”

He starts crying for the first time since he sent Hannibal alway, and Molly scoots closer, resting her head on his shoulder.

“I remembered Abigail today,” Will says after he catches his breath. “We fought. Well, I fought. He just kind of stood there.”

“You don’t think he was just staying calm so you’d reflect his mood?” Molly asks.

“Oh, I know that’s why. And with you, it was nice, it was because you didn’t want me to be upset. With him, it’s a manipulation, it always has been,” Will says. “And then he kisses me and I’m a fucking goner. I sent him away because I can’t keep doing that.”

“You really think he’s still manipulating you,” Molly says quietly. It’s not a question, it’s more like she’s wondering aloud to herself. Like it should be so obvious that Hannibal isn’t, but Will knows Hannibal always will.

“I told him we could get through it, and then sent him away because I realized I would rather not try. That makes me terrible, right? Like I’m a bad person for that.”

“Will,” Molly says, with a quiet disbelieving laugh. “You’re worried about seeming like a terrible person in comparison to a cannibalistic serial killer.”

“Yeah, well, I’m also a cannibalistic serial killer,” Will mutters.

Molly doesn’t even flinch at the admission, just pats his shoulder. “Yeah, I guess you are. Sorry, it’s just hard to think of you that way.”

“So you understand why I don’t think of it with him? Because I knew him before I knew about that, unlike the people that only know him for that.”

“Yeah, I understand,” Molly sighs.

“Yeah, but I can’t look over him killing my best friend, or my surrogate daughter,” Will concludes.

“And he shouldn’t ask you to.”

“And he hasn’t, he just tries to justify it by saying Abigail *had to die,* like what the *fuck?”*

“I’m assuming he explained it to you?”

“Yeah after I yelled at him. And the worst part is that his reason actually kind of made sense, but the blame was still placed on me. As if he wasn't the one that called the Hobbs’

household that day and set the course of our entire relationship with Abigail into motion with *his* actions," Will says. He stands and paces the living room. "I know I made a good decision by sending him away. The right decision."

"Did you?" Molly asks.

"Oh don't. Don't even. Not tonight. Just agree with me tonight."

"Fine, I'll agree with you. Yes, I think it was good of you to send away the man you divorced me for because you've been in love with him for years. And it's great that you sent away the only person who has truly understood you," Molly says. Her words cut, but there's no malice in her voice, no edge in her tone.

Will groans. "Yeah, yeah. I'm going to give it a few months, I think. Maybe see other people while I'm at it. Who knows? Maybe another serial killer with an interest in my mind will fall at my feet. Wouldn't that be funny?"

"Hilarious," Molly deadpans. "Oh, Will. You know he'll kill anyone you touch."

"He killed my first boyfriend last night," Will says. "Feels like days ago, actually. He left me tied to the bed, *naked,* and then left to go kill him."

"I really don't know how to respond to that," Molly says. There's a hint of laughter in her voice, and in retrospect the entire thing was kind of funny, but he's still pissed off about it. "Why would you even let him tie you up?"

"He had good reasoning for it," Will mumbles. "Anyway, so he comes back in the middle of the night after kidnapping a fucking police officer, and tries asking if I want to participate."

"And did you?"

"No, I kneed him in the fucking balls and told him to figure it out himself," Will laughs. "So he comes back in the morning, and I'm doubting our relationship, right?"

"Yes, of course," Molly says. She's listening intently, and Will is grateful for her friendship, even after everything he has put her through.

"Yes, so I was doubting our relationship at the time, but I didn't want to fight anymore. I took him to the shower, then we got in bed and slept all morning. Then we had sex, and I'll spare you the details on that--"

"Thank you," Molly laughs.

"--but it was really good, and I thought we were really getting somewhere. But of course I remembered *everything* , so then I got angry, and we fought about Abigail. And he kissed me, and we hugged, and I was a goner. Like putty in his hands. So when I finally came back to myself I kicked him out and threatened to call Jack Crawford," Will finishes.

"And he just left?"

Will sighs and sits back down on the couch. He props his feet up in her lap like they have done so often, and rests his head on the opposite arm rest.

“Yes, he left.”

Will remembers just *days* ago when he had proposed. When he told Hannibal to never leave him…

*Hannibal arches his back when Will pushes back into him. Will lets go of Hannibal’s thighs letting his legs fall back down, and Will leans forward so he can kiss Hannibal’s mouth.*

*“Love you,” Will says against his lips. “Never leave me.”*

*“Will,” Hannibal breathes, lifting his head to kiss Will again. His arms make their way around Will’s back, pulling him as close as possible while Will continues to move inside him.*

*“When we-” Will starts, but cuts himself off with a moan. He tries again, voice breathy while he tries to make it through his request. “When we leave, I don’t give a shit about the FBI or keeping myself seemingly unassociated with you. Find a way that we can get married.”*

*“Will,” Hannibal whispers again, like it’s the only word his lips can form. There are tears filling in his eyes while he looks up at Will.*

*“With our real names,” Will clarifies. “I want to be married to Hannibal Lecter, not one of your aliases.”*

Now, he doesn’t know… he doesn’t know if they’re still going to get married. Hannibal left, even though Will told him not to, he did. Because he can always just pack up and go, just because Will asks. Because he always just does what Will says.

Molly’s hand patting his ankle draws him out of the memory, and he realizes he’s crying for what feels like the fifteenth time in two days.

“I proposed,” Will blurts out. “A few nights ago.”

“Hm,” Molly hums. “What are you doing, Will? You love him, and couples fight. I mean maybe not about killing loved ones, but the arguments are situational, so that’s what you signed up for. You really want to give him up?”

“No,” Will whispers. He covers his face with his hands. “I think I just need some time away from him.”

“Then take it, but don’t stay away forever. There’s nothing left for you at the FBI, there’s nothing left for you here, or in Wolf Trap. He’s what you have, and what you have wanted for years,” Molly says gently. “Everything he does, he’s been doing it for you.”

“I don’t know about that,” Will argues.

“That morning he was here, and you were finishing up in the shower, we weren’t talking about you falling down the stairs,” Molly admits. “He was asking me if I thought he should

propose. He was telling me how much he loves you. He was telling me how lucky I've been the last three years, and thanked me for taking care of you."

Will just shuts his eyes and tries not to start crying again. He nods, and checks the time on his phone, seeing that it's after two in the morning.

"I should, um, I should sleep," Will says after a second.

"Alright, Will," Molly says. She stands and goes toward the stairs, stopping when Will speaks again.

"Is Wally here?"

"No, he's at my parents," Molly answers.

"Alright," Will nods. After taking off his jeans, he lays down on the couch again, and pulls a blanket over himself. "Thank you for everything, Molly."

Molly gives him a smile and says, "Goodnight, Will."

The next few days, Will hangs out, and helps Molly with some things around the house. Checking the smoke detectors, and fixing the leaky faucet in the kitchen, cleaning out the fridge, just trying to be useful. Molly stands by and engages in easy conversation.

She tells him about Reba, how they talk on the phone nearly every night, how Molly's seen her a few times now. It's a welcome distraction from thoughts about Hannibal.

Jack does call on the third day to tell Will about the latest Ripper victim. He tells Will they spoke to the man's wife, and Will pretends to be devastated and surprised when Jack tells him that the man is Will's ex. Jack seems to buy it, and Will assures him, once again, that he's safe. Jack sounds almost pleased to hear Will is staying with Molly. Too pleased, but Will doesn't have the heart to tell him it's not like that.

"I'm thinking about moving," Molly says after a week.

"Yeah? Where to?" Will asks, leaning against the kitchen counter.

"The Baltimore area," Molly shrugs.

"For *Reba?* " Will teases.

"Yes, Will," Molly says with a shy smile. "Things are going well between us. No offense, but the fact that neither of us are serial killers is kind of a bonus for both of us."

"No offense taken, I know exactly how it feels," Will says with a smile. He pauses, then says, "I think I'm going to go out tonight."

"You think that's a good idea?" Molly asks cautiously.

"Not at all," Will says, completely certain. "But I don't care."

“Well, use protection, and maybe don’t bring anyone back here,” Molly says, and pats him on the shoulder.

Will laughs and goes back to work in the kitchen while Molly leaves the room to go watch TV.

“I probably won’t come back tonight,” Will calls out.

“I figured,” Molly calls back.

He goes into the living room to find her gone, then she comes running back down the stairs and tosses a box of condoms to him.

“Great, thank you,” Will says, voice edging on sarcastic. “I will bring condoms from my ex-wife’s nightstand to the bar tonight.”

“They’re from *your* nightstand, actually,” Molly shrugs.

“What else did I leave in there?” Will asks.

“You can go check.”

So Will goes up the stairs and into the bedroom he used to share with Molly. His nightstand on his side of the bed looks untouched since the last night he slept there. He opens the drawer and frowns. Inside are a few pieces of hard candy; small things like spare buttons for shirts, fish hooks, some spare change; some loose aspirin pills; but what causes his frown is an envelope up against the back of it, stuck in the small space in the wood where the back panel meets the bottom. Hannibal’s handwriting, Will’s name.

He tears it open, and pulls out several pieces of paper.

Dated the same week Dolarhyde was defeated. Molly would have still been in the hospital the day it’s dated, meaning Hannibal broke in to place it. Likely no one knows he was ever here, and Molly certainly didn’t know the letter was there, having only opened it enough to remove the box of condoms that were likely sitting in the front.

He sits down on the edge of the bed to read the letter, his hands shaking as he does.

*Dearest Will,*

*If you are reading this, you have gone back to your home, and the wife. I respect this decision, but I need you to know how I feel. If you never read this, and you come to me, I will hopefully, one day, speak the words to you and this letter will have been for naught. Assuming, though, you have decided to go home, this is what I need to say:*

*I firmly believe we were put in each other’s paths for a reason. Any circumstances our lives could have put us in would have put us in Jack Crawford’s office, or at the same bar, or placed our seats next to each other at the opera, or we would have found each other hunting the same victim. No matter who we were, or where we ended up, there has never been any doubt in my mind that we would have met each other.*

*You have never been scared of me, never scared to challenge me, never scared to put your trust in me. I abused that lack of fear. I was reckless with you. Impulsive. My behavior was oftentimes uncalled for. All either of us wanted was to be understood, and I could never truly communicate my feelings for you, thus never letting you truly understand what you mean to me. You are my biggest regret. Not properly loving you has been my greatest regret. Abigail is a close second.*

*And I do regret what happened between us, and what happened with Abigail. Perhaps it is not regret in the traditional sense, but if I know what regret is, then that's what I feel.*

*Killing Francis Dolarhyde was all I ever wanted for us, and I did not dare try to take any more from you. I have taken enough, and I cannot, in good conscience, take any more. I need you to give freely, love freely, and live freely, in order to feel like there is an ounce of equality between us. So, that is why I left you on that cliffside. Not because I don't love you, not because I don't want you. Because I need you to make that decision on your own.*

*I have been in love with you since the day we met, and I will never find another person like you that I could love even a percentage of the amount I love you.*

*As cliche as it may be, you have stolen my heart, Will Graham. You have swallowed it whole, and I would like it back. And the only way I can ever get it back, is if you give me your heart to devour in return.*

*You have made your decision to go back to your wife, and your safe life, and I did say I respect that. If you never decide to find me, I will live with your decision, even if it will pain me greatly to do so. I just needed to give you this. I needed to be honest for once. Do with this what you will.*

*I have unfinished business in the States, but if you choose to come to me, if you choose to leave your wife behind, I will see you at Bedelia Du Maurier's house on the date given on the invitation enclosed in this envelope.*

*All my love,*

*Hannibal Lecter*

Tears fall freely from his eyes, yet again. He quickly wipes them away when he hears Molly's footsteps coming up the stairs.

Without saying a word, he pushes the letter into her hands, and lays down on the bed. Molly sits next to him while she reads it, and Will can't stop himself from crying. She puts one hand on his shoulder in comfort, and Will lets sobs run through his body.

It makes sense, all of it. Hannibal had been certain he would go back to his wife. Was likely certain Will would after Hannibal was brought back into custody. Hannibal likely still thinks Will is playing some sort of game, to catch him, to bring him in, so he could go right back into Molly's bed.

*Oh fuck,* Will thinks. *Oh, I really fucked this up.*

Will remembers, clear as day, a phone call he had with Hannibal, the words Hannibal said that hurt so bad.

*“It doesn’t make any sense, Hannibal.”*

*“It will,” Hannibal says. “I need to be certain, Will.”*

*Will groans. “I finally want to see you and you don’t want to see me.”*

*“Well, at least you know how it feels now,” Hannibal says.*

*“Hannibal,” Will sighs. “I’m…”*

*“Don’t apologize,” Hannibal says, a strong edge to his words. “You are not sorry, so do not pretend you are. You’re sorry for yourself, not sorry to me.”*

*“How would you know?” Will snaps.*

*“Because I know you,” Hannibal shoots back. “I know that you do not actually know what you want, and I know that you think you do because of that journal you found in my cell. What you don’t know is that I wrote those entries so the orderlies would stay out of my belongings. My feelings for you go beyond what has been written in those pages, beyond sexual desire. Do you understand, Will?”*

*“Yes,” Will says slowly. Trying to swallow down his rising anger, his rising outburst that he knows will just cause more problems.*

*“So you see, how I find myself guarded around you. When your feelings and desperation have only come out to me after you masturbated reading that journal,” Hannibal says. As an afterthought, it seems, he says, “Desperate is not a good look on you, Will.”*

Now it makes perfect sense. How Hannibal was just waiting for the other shoe to drop, for everything to crash down around him when Will went back to Molly. It was going to make sense when he read the letter, when Will was sitting in his bedroom with Molly by his side. That’s what Hannibal was anticipating the entire time.

Now here Will is, reading the letter he should have never read. Because he should've never left Hannibal, should’ve never felt the need to show up at Molly’s for the comfort he seeked.

It all makes sense, but none of it does at all. Hannibal wanted him to read the letter, but he didn’t.

Hannibal was upset Will didn’t know his feelings, his current feelings, and then chose to leave Molly, not knowing them. Only taking the word of that journal, the one describing sexual desire, rather than the love he feels.

It makes Will’s head spin round and round.

It is likely that after some time, after they first had sex, that Hannibal realized he wasn’t fully ready for Will to know the words in the letter, which is why he showed up at Molly’s that

night, the last time Will was here. The conversation they'd had when Hannibal came in.

*"I am here to make sure you aren't sleeping with your wife," Hannibal murmurs.*

*"Ex-wife, you idiot," Will mumbles. "I'm sleeping on the couch."*

*"Come stay in a hotel with me," Hannibal whispers.*

*"No," Will says, stepping away. "No, you need to go back to wherever you came from."*

*"What if we both sleep on the couch?"*

*"So Molly can come down and find us together? And then call the police," Will says.*

*"You said she knows about us," Hannibal whispers. He reaches out and tugs Will back to him by a hand. "I'll be gone before she wakes."*

*"You shouldn't have come here at all. You should trust that I'm not sleeping with my ex-wife," Will says firmly.*

Oh, but Hannibal was trying to distract him, pull him away from the possibility of finding that letter in the drawer. Because he wasn't ready to talk about Abigail, because he wasn't ready to talk about regrets yet. And he still wasn't ready a week ago when Will forced him to do it.

Will fucked up big time, and he needs to get Hannibal back. The love of his life, *his* Hannibal. And he knows the only way he will be able to do so.

"Call him," Molly says, dragging Will back to the present. "I take it you aren't going out tonight, and you're going to get him back. So call him right now."

Will shakes his head. He didn't bring the burner phone, and even if he did he knows Hannibal disconnected his number. "He won't answer."

"You don't know that," Molly tries.

"No, I do. I only have one option here."

"Bedelia's?"

"Bedelia's," Will confirms.

He has months to prepare, to figure out what he needs to say. But he also has months alone. And it's going to be more painful than the years previous. More painful than any of the physical wounds Will suffered at Hannibal's hands.

Hannibal has his heart. Tore it out, and took it with him. The only way he will get through these next five months is knowing he has done the exact same thing to Hannibal.

He just hopes Hannibal doesn't fuck it all up and get himself caught before then.

Chapter End Notes

One more chapter after this and then an epilogue. I promise a happy ending, of course.

# Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

> This is it! The last actual chapter, and then I'll have an epilogue hopefully in a few days. Please leave comments and let me know what you think!! And thanks for coming along for the ride.

Will ends up falling asleep in Molly's bed, fully clothed and on top of the covers. He doesn't mean to, it just happens. Molly doesn't tell him to leave, and he figures they both know it doesn't mean anything. It's not as if they didn't share a bed for nearly three years.

He wishes he were in bed with Hannibal instead.

At some point in the night he ends up going down to the couch, wrapping himself up tight in the blanket and curling up on his side. He remembers the night Hannibal came to make sure Will wasn't sleeping with Molly. His entire being yearns for that to happen again. He wants Hannibal to come in through that door, catch him in an embrace, then take him away.

Instead all he has is the dogs, and the sound of the wind outside the house.

He leaves in the morning.

When Will arrives home after the long drive, he finds the engagement ring he threw at Hannibal sitting on the railing of his porch. He pockets it, and throughout the rest of the week, no matter what he's doing, he finds his hand in his pocket, feeling the smooth surface of the ring. A reminder of what he had.

It's also a reminder of how quickly he jumped into everything. So desperate to make sure Hannibal wouldn't slip through his fingers again, so desperate to finally solidify what they mean to each other. It all happened too quickly.

Will sits on his couch, turning the ring over in his fingers, but not daring to put it back on. He stares at the journal sitting on his coffee table again, next to his burner phone that he dares to ring. Hopes it will ring.

It doesn't.

He sits there for hours— days? He doesn't know how long he just sits. He only stands to use the bathroom or to take care of the dogs, but then he finds himself back where he was. Unmoving.

It's worse than the weeks after killing Dolarhyde. At least then, he didn't know what he was missing. Now all he can think of is how *good* it felt to be around Hannibal again. After all

these years apart, it was just nice to be in each other's company again. It was like old times with the added bonus of sex.

Now he has nothing again, but all he can think of is when he had something.

He thinks the positive memories hurt worse than the negative. He replays their first night together in his head. How Hannibal had let himself go entirely, surrendered himself to emotion, and to *love.* And it causes Will's chest to tighten so badly he can't breathe.

He thinks of the day he came home to find Hannibal in nothing but an apron, how good it felt to slide into him, gripping his hips tight while he fucked him. And how tender things became when they moved to the bed. When Will told Hannibal he wanted to marry him.

*So stupid,* Will thinks. So stupid that he would ask after only a few weeks of them being— together? A couple? Neither of those things seem right. Their entire relationship from the day they *met* has felt like they were a couple. Will remembers those first few weeks, when they were always with each other; visiting Abigail, or crime scenes, and then having appointments. It was constant, and he's surprised people didn't ask if they were dating back then.

He supposes, he *was* asked at Hannibal's trial if they were romantically involved. Saying *no* had felt so *wrong* because while they had never established a romantic relationship— had never kissed, held hands, or had sex, or anything else the average couple does— that day Hannibal rescued him from Muskrat Farm, when Will sent him away, had felt like a breakup. An honest to god breakup. Just like the one a week and a half ago.

Will knows he needs time to remember who he is without Hannibal. Needs to reflect on who he wants to become while he's with Hannibal. Whoever he becomes, he knows he can't lose himself in the process.

He turned down killing his ex because he felt Hannibal didn't deserve his participation. He knows he wants to kill Bedelia, but does Hannibal deserve it this time? Will briefly considers tracking her down and doing it now, but decides against it. He won't do it because then there's a chance he will never get Hannibal back. The invitation has a date, a time, and a place. That's his one shot of finding him again.

Two weeks after returning home from Molly's— three weeks after Will sent Hannibal away — Will gets a call from Jack.

"We think it's him, but we're not sure," Jack says when Will answers.

"You need me to confirm it?" Will asks. He stands up from the couch, his legs stiff and weak from disuse over the last week.

"Yes. I'll come get you. It's local," Jack says. "Be there in fifteen."

"I'll be ready."

Will hangs up and goes to find some clean clothes, having worn the same thing for days now.

Part of him is terrified that it's Hannibal, terrified that he's going to be caught this time. Another part of him is excited to see his work again, to be the only one that knows for certain whether or not it's him. A third part of him wants to kill Hannibal for breaking his promise to Will. Breaking the promise that he wouldn't kill until they leave together, or at least wouldn't stage it in a way that would fit his work.

Jack arrives and Will nearly runs to his car.

He's not briefed on the case in the car like normal, and Will thinks that Jack must just want him to see it for himself. The drive is spent in near silence, the only conversation they have being short.

"So, you're back with Molly?" Jack asks.

"No. I was just visiting," Will answers. "Just friends. She's dating Reba McClane now."

"Dolarhyde's girlfriend?" Jack asks.

"Not anymore," Will answers, just how Molly did when Will asked the exact same question.

And that is the entire conversation, ended with a huff of laughter from Jack, while Will stares out the window, watching the scenery go by.

Before long, Will realizes the area is familiar and his heart sinks in his chest at what he knows is coming.

Jack leads Will into the stable where he almost killed Clark Ingram all those years ago. On the ground at the far end is a horse, stomach torn open with a body laying half inside of it.

"How long has the horse been dead?" Will asks, swallowing the sob he wants to let out.

"We don't think whoever did this killed the horse, if that's what you're asking," Jimmy says, now standing next to them in front of the scene. "This is like that case a few years ago, but the victim— Clark Ingram— wasn't found sewn in like Sarah Craber, just laying partly inside like he was clawing his way out."

Will nods and takes a step forward and steps over Clark Ingram's body, examining the horse. It's been dead for a while, Will can see that. The level of decay, the amount of soil still in its hair. It was buried and unburied.

"Do we know where the horse was buried?" Will asks.

"Not yet. We're going to test the soil, and ask around about people who have recently buried a horse. The robbed grave hasn't been reported yet," Brian says.

"It's him," Will whispers.

"You're sure?" Jack asks.

"Yeah," Will breathes. "I can't be here. I'm going to wait in the car."

“Wait, Will,” Jack says, grabbing Will’s arm to keep him from walking away. “Ingram was a suspect in the murders of those girls, but we didn’t have anything to prove he did it. Did Lecter know more than us?”

“Yeah. He knew enough,” Will answers. He shakes Jack’s hand off and leaves the stable, nearly runs to Jack’s car and slides into the passenger seat.

Minutes later, maybe even hours later, Jack gets into the driver’s seat of the car and Will jumps when the car door slams on Jack’s side. For however long he was alone, Will just sat staring off into space, unaware of the passage of time, not thinking about a single thing. Completely blank.

“I need you to tell me what you know,” Jack says after a long silence.

“I’m not sure you want to know that, Jack. I’m not sure what will happen to me if I tell you.”

“Nothing. It stays between us,” Jack says. His voice sounds sincere enough, but Will never knows anymore. He has his own penchant for manipulation, and after being back with Hannibal, he’s been reminded how easy it is to be lied to. He doesn’t fully believe that Jack is also lying, but trusting other people is such a hard thing for Will to come by these days. Or ever.

“Hannibal and I saw Clark Ingram crawl out of a horse years ago. Peter Bernandone put him there because he wanted Ingram to feel how those girls felt. Ingram was framing Peter for killing those sixteen girls,” Will explains. “I was going to kill Ingram and Hannibal stopped me.”

“Why would he do that?” Jack asks.

“Naturally, I wanted to kill Hannibal for everything he did to me, and Hannibal knew Ingram was just a stand-in for himself. He told me killing Ingram wouldn’t feel like killing him,” Will says, so quiet he hopes Jack just doesn’t hear him at all.

“So why did Lecter decide to kill him after all these years?”

“He wanted to take the kill away from me, I guess,” Will shrugs. “Maybe he thought I would come back to finish the job I started, but I never did. He saved Ingram’s life, then finally decided it was his time to die.”

“Just like his first kill after the dragon,” Jack says. “But you knew the entire story and didn’t report it. Why?”

“No one was going to believe me. I told you all I knew it was him and there was no evidence,” Will says. “So I was going to kill him because I was in the same position Peter was in. Clark Ingram was Peter Berndadone’s *Hannibal Lecter.* So I thought killing him would… I don’t know what I thought,” Will lies, stopping himself from saying, *‘I thought killing him would feel good,’* and goes on to say, “I remember telling Hannibal I regretted what I did that day-- not wanting to kill him, though. I regretted letting Hannibal stop me. After years outside of his direct influence, I don’t feel that way anymore.”

Jack stays silent for a long moment, then, “So Ingram did kill those sixteen girls, and Lecter stopped you from killing him. There was no evidence beside your word pointing to him, but you both knew. How much of what you did, and said to Lecter was a part of our plan?”

Will shrugs, but doesn’t answer. He still doesn’t know how much of that time was loyalty to Jack or Hannibal. Mostly Hannibal, sure, but all of the conversations they had… He doesn’t know if he really felt that way about killing back then. Killing Tier was one thing, an act of self defense, but the aftermath was a lot more. He doesn’t know anything, it still all confuses him to this day.

Jack says something else, but Will doesn’t listen. He just stays silent, staring off into the setting sun outside the car.

He’s pissed at Hannibal for taking this away from him. He knows his hands are shaking, and he hopes Jack thinks it’s because they’re talking about Hannibal, not because Will is angry that he couldn’t be the one to kill Clark Ingram. That Hannibal stopped him *years ago* just to turn around now and kill him himself.

He fumes the entire ride home, and when Jack stops the car, he mumbles a ‘thanks,’ and stumbles up to his front door. He lets the dogs out and stands on the porch while they run around. When they come back up, he shuts the door and locks it, then falls into the bed in the living room and sleeps.

Over the next month, he doesn’t do a lot. Hannibal doesn’t kill again; or no one knows if he does. Will feels like he’s lost his last connection to him now, no longer seeing the corpses he leaves behind. He wonders if Hannibal is just searching for the Vergers and that’s why he hasn’t killed anyone-- devoting all of his time to tracking down a family with enough money and power to never be found. It’s possible. He knows Hannibal will end up killing Alana some day.

Still, neither Margot or Alana turn up dead or get reported missing, so Will knows he hasn’t found them.

Without Freddie Lounds alive, it’s difficult to know about murder cases he isn’t on with the FBI, and it’s hard to know if Hannibal has been leaving any bodies that don’t get put on the FBI’s radar. He almost regrets killing Freddie Lounds, only because of the lack of information.

Jack has Will on some of the weirder cases, and Will doesn’t mind helping, nor does he mind picking up a few lectures every once in a while. It keeps him busy enough to not think so much about how he misses Hannibal.

That entire month, he keeps the ring in his pocket, or on his nightstand, never putting it back on, just turning it in his fingers. A reminder.

One day, though, he does slip it onto his finger, and realizes it’s too big. Too big to be his own. He doesn’t think he’d have lost enough weight to make his ring size change so drastically. Which means it’s Hannibal’s ring.

His own was nowhere to be found outside, so Will can only assume Hannibal took Will's when it was thrown at him. And he left his own for Will to keep. A promise that they aren't done.

Molly moves down to the area three months after she told Will she would— about two months away from when Will is supposed to show up at Bedelia's house. He helps her move all of her stuff, drives a Uhaul from Maine to Virginia with most of her house packed into it. Wally doesn't speak to him the entire time the three of them furnish Molly's new house. Will doesn't blame him.

He has dinner with Molly, Reba, and Wally, and seeing Molly with Reba, how sweet the two of them are together, he's glad that he and Molly didn't work out. She deserves someone that isn't him.

After dinner, Molly pulls Will aside, pulling him outside onto the porch, and pulls him into a hug.

"Thank you for helping, Will," she whispers. "How have you been?"

"I miss him," Will whispers back.

"You're going to get him back, right?" Molly asks.

"I am."

Will goes home that night and sees the journal sitting on the coffee table. He hasn't read it since that day Hannibal made him read it on the couch. He hesitates before picking it up and flipping to a random page toward the end.

The day Will first went to see him, to ask about the Dragon.

*I saw Will today. His aftershave was atrocious, and not as welcome as I once thought it would be. He was cold and distant, wanting to stay unfamiliar and unfriendly. It all felt like a trick, like it was just for the cameras. Perhaps the glint in his eye or the way he stood there with his lips parted, was all in my head, but I do not think so. He came because he needed help with the case, but I know him. He came because he wanted to see me, even if it was for the case.*

*Those parted lips as I said 'you just came to look at me,' all but begged for me to kiss them. If there weren't an inch of glass between us, I truly think I would have kissed him. I would have finally claimed his mouth with my own, and I would have drawn such pretty sounds from him. I would have pulled our hips together, I would have pressed my clothed cock to his, would have moved slowly, torturously, against him. I wonder how quickly he would have become hard from just kissing and the slow grind of our hips.*

*I've fantasized about our first time for years, finding so many possible scenarios and outcomes. Today I thought about unzipping my jumpsuit and pulling my cock out. If the air holes in my cell were slightly lower, I wonder how easily it would have been to convince Will*

*to allow me to fuck him through one. Perhaps it is by design that the air holes are above waist height, then.*

*Of course, that feels too crude. I would want to shower Will in affection, and love for the first time. I want to hold him, to be able to touch him as I please. So this fantasy did not get to completion before I began thinking about rose petals and candles, as trite as that may be.*

Will can't help but laugh. And he laughs for what feels like hours, but surely it is only a few minutes before his laughing turns into sobbing, and tears are streaming down his face.

At that moment, he just wants Hannibal. No more of Hannibal's words on paper, in this journal that doesn't have all the information. The journal where Hannibal is in control of everything, unlike how it truly is when they've had sex. It doesn't feel organic because Hannibal didn't know what to expect whatsoever.

Will doesn't need the godforsaken journal anymore. He builds a fire in the fireplace, and throws it in.

He sits on the floor while it burns, half the entries having never been read by him, half the drawings having never been seen by him. He watches it until it's nothing but ash, and the fire dies down to embers.

For a split second he regrets doing it, but then he stands up, pours himself a full glass of whiskey and sits down to watch TV like he didn't just burn one of the only things he has left of Hannibal. He reminds himself he'll see him again soon. Only a few months to go.

One day, only a month away from the date he's supposed to show up at Bedelia's, he checks the mail. After being home all day, he is surprised to find a thick envelope with Hannibal's handwriting on it. Hand delivered with no return address, just Will's first and last name. Which means Hannibal came either while Will was sleeping the night before, or while Will was sitting on the couch watching TV. Meaning he only missed Hannibal because he didn't happen to look out the window, or because the dogs didn't alert Will to his presence.

It's heartbreaking.

He takes the mail inside and sets everything aside, picking up Hannibal's envelope first. He rips open the top and shakes out its contents.

Plane tickets, a set of keys, a passport, a driver's license, a birth certificate, a social security card. Nothing has his name on it, but rather a different name altogether. Different birthdate, address, birthplace. His photo is on the driver's license and passport next to the name Lucien Hart— a name that Will is definitely going to google after he looks through all this to see what it means— which also appears on all the other documents except for one of the plane tickets.

The one plane ticket has the name Will Graham on it, and it's for a month from now, two days before the date on the invitation— a direct flight from Dulles to London Heathrow. First class.

Finally, he finds a letter and unfolds it.

*Dearest Will,*

*I do not wish to presume, and I am not. I just wish to give you the proper information and resources in case you do choose to dine with Bedelia and I.*

*Enclosed are all the documents you will require. I am leaving the country tonight, after I drop this envelope at your house. If I am caught, you will know. If there is no news of my capture, I will be at Bedelia's on the agreed upon date.*

*She has fled the country and now resides in Wales, which is why I have enclosed a ticket to London. You will board the plane as yourself, you will check into a hotel in London as yourself, but you will travel through the United Kingdom as Lucien Hart. Bedelia's new address is enclosed.*

*I have also provided information about where to send your dogs if that is what you wish to do. Chiyoh will retrieve them from the airport and bring them to the home I have arranged for us.*

*Following our dinner with Bedelia, everything else is your choice. Whether you come with me, or not, I will not attempt to influence that decision. If you choose not to come, I will take that for what it is. This will be the final time I contact you between now and then.*

*I do hope to see you again, dear Will. You are an ever glowing light in my life, which is why I have chosen the name Lucien for you. The last name I chose for both of us means bravery and strength, and together we are stronger than anyone in the world. An alternative meaning is stag. I thought you might find it amusing.*

*All my love,*

*Hannibal Lecter*

On the back of a letter is Bedelia's new address.

Will hopes with his entire being that Hannibal makes it to where he's going with no complications. Will couldn't bear having no chance to patch things up between them. He doesn't know if he would be able to  break Hannibal out of prison again. This is their only shot.

All of Hannibal's planning over the last few months is starting to show, and everything is becoming so *real*. He looks at the dogs, then at the information on where to send them. They will need to be shipped off the day before Will leaves America, and it appears that everything is in order. He feels terrible about it, though. He doesn't know if he'll be able to get to wherever Hannibal has arranged for them to live. He has no idea if they'll be caught killing Bedelia, or if they'll be able to cross any borders.

He just hopes there's a plan in place where Molly can get them back if he's apprehended.

Over the next month he packs up everything he wants to keep, and he sells things he doesn't. Some things go to Molly, some things just stay with the house. He doesn't put the house on the market because it will be too obvious he's leaving.

He tells Jack he's going on a vacation, that he wants to see Europe again, untainted by what happened last time. Jack wishes him well, tells him to be safe. He doesn't seem to suspect anything. Doesn't mention that Bedelia Du Maurier is living in Wales. Maybe he doesn't know.

He gives Molly enough money to ship all of his belongings when he finally gets an address.

The day before he's set to leave, he gets the dogs sent off to Paris, though he's certain Hannibal won't have them living in Paris. If he does, Will's going to beg to move out of the city. He's sure Hannibal wouldn't deny him, out of fear of losing him again.

He gets all of his fake documents into a secret pocket of his backpack, and hopes there's nothing that will be flagged on the TSA machines. If his bag is searched, and an entire life's worth of fake documents are found, it's likely game over for him.

Maybe he could flash his FBI badge and they'll back off. He packs it just in case.

He has clothes, both formal and casual. He has a large supply of aspirin, his laptop, his cell phone. He has a list of phone numbers that he thinks he may need for when he inevitably ditches his cell phone and buys a new one so no one calls him and tracks him down.

Molly drives him to the airport, silent the entire way. When they pull up to the curb, she gets out and helps him with his bags. She pulls him into a hug, tighter than Will has ever been hugged.

"We'll see each other again one day," Will whispers. "I'll make Hannibal fly you out some time. God knows he has the money for it."

Molly laughs against his chest and pulls away.

"You've been my best friend for years now," she says. "Marriage was a mistake, maybe, but I'm really glad we're both finding happiness now. I wouldn't change a thing."

"Neither would I, Molly," Will says. He pulls her back in for another hug so she can't see the tears in his eyes. "Thank you for everything. I wouldn't have gotten through the last three years without you."

When they finally pull away, Will is ready to leave. Ready to go find Hannibal.

He reminds her of his things, makes sure she has his house keys, tells her to sell his car if she wants to, or to keep it for Wally in a few years. She tells him she knows; that they've been over everything six times in the last two days.

He knows he's stalling at this point. As ready to find Hannibal as he is, he doesn't know if he's ready to give up everything he knows. To say goodbye to his entire life.

“Go get him,” Molly says, pushing Will away playfully.

“Yeah. I’ll go get him,” Will says with a smile.

Will checks his suitcase of clothes and items he doesn’t want to risk getting lost in the mail, and gets through security without a problem. He sits down at his gate and can’t stop shaking with anticipation. He’s scared that an airport police officer will ask him why he’s shaking so badly, and think he’s up to something bad. Which he *is* because he’s quite literally leaving the country to go kill Bedelia with someone on the FBI’s Most Wanted List.

When he’s finally on the plane, Will lets himself relax a bit. He just needs to land in London, get through customs, then he only has a few hours before he’ll be on a train, on the way to Hannibal.

He had to remove the ring from his pocket before going through security, so he reaches into his backpack and pulls it out again, turning it over in his fingers while he goes over the information he was given.

He doesn’t know what the keys are for. Hannibal didn’t give him any information about the set of keys in the envelope, but Will knows one is a car key and another must be a house key. He wonders if it’s keys to *their* house, or to Bedelia’s.

He checks his wallet once more, making sure he has his debit card to pay for the hotel Hannibal told him to check in to. He doesn’t know why he needs to check into a hotel when he’s supposed to arrive at Bedelia’s only a few hours after he lands.

The flight is long, the customs line takes forever, and baggage claim takes a long time, too, but once he’s outside waiting for a taxi, he feels a huge amount of relief.

*This is it,* Will tells himself.

In the cab he checks over his hotel reservation again and sees it’s a pay-by-the-hour motel, a detail he missed before. He has it reserved only for a two hours, just until he’s supposed to leave for the train station.

At the desk, he does as Hannibal told him.

“I have a reservation for Will Graham,” he tells the lady at the front desk.

“Ah! Your wife is already upstairs. Here is your key,” she says, handing him the key and room number.

“My wi--” Will cuts himself off, figuring he shouldn’t draw attention to his confusion. Instead he gives her a smile and says, “Thanks.”

He goes up the stairs and slides the key into his door. He opens it slowly, unsure of who he’s going to see inside.

Both relief and hesitation flow through him when he sees Chiyoh sitting on the bed. She stands and bows her head in greeting, but waits to speak until Will shuts the door behind

him.

“What are you doing here?” Will asks.

“Helping you with your alibi,” she answers. “I will need your debit card.”

“Wh-- Okay,” Will decides to say. He slides his card out of his wallet and hands it over.

“And your cell phone,” she says.

Will hands that over, too. She sets them both into her bag, then pulls out an envelope.

“From Hannibal,” Chiyoh tells him.

Will opens it to find a *lot* of cash, and a new card with the name *Lucien Hart* on it.

“I will be taking your cell phone and debit card to Brussels,” Chiyoh explains. “I have an ID with my photo and your name, and will make purchases with your account at the same time you are due at Doctor Du Maurier’s home.”

“Right,” Will nods. “Wait-- how are my dogs?”

“They arrived safely. A sitter is watching them until I return tonight. They are in good hands,” Chiyoh says.

“Does Hannibal know? That I’m here?” Will asks.

Chiyoh shakes her head. “I have been in charge of your arrival, and your dogs. He has not been informed.”

“Good.”

Chiyoh goes to the closet then, and pulls out a suit. Black with a dark blue floral print on it.

“He wishes for you to wear this,” Chiyoh says. “I must go now. Don’t hurt him again.”

With that, Chiyoh walks out of the room and shuts the door behind her. Her words bounce around in Will’s skull the entire time he showers and gets dressed. Her tone was firm, and warning, and he wonders if she will take matters into her own hands if Will breaks Hannibal’s heart again.

He can’t help but smirk at the thought of Chiyoh pushing him off another train, or shooting him again.

When he finishes getting dressed, he finds a pair of leather gloves in the suit pockets. He doesn’t bother putting them on yet.

He walks to the train station, and buys his ticket for the train to get him to Cardiff. It should take less than two hours, but he doesn’t even have a cell phone to pass his time on. Instead he just sits and watches out the window, wondering what he’s going to say.

He thinks he might throw himself into Hannibal's arms, kiss him all over, but then he thinks there's other things that need to be taken care of first. As much as he wants to give himself over to Hannibal again, he doesn't know how forgiving Hannibal is going to be. Will literally threw him out onto the porch and told him to leave. Said that he was done.

Hannibal still gave Will everything he needed to change his mind, though. So maybe forgiveness has already been given.

At his stop, he knows he doesn't have much further to go before Bedelia's house, so he decides to walk. It's the end of Summer, and the weather is still so nice, that he doesn't mind at all. He's glad he mapped out everything and memorized it before leaving the states, having known that he wouldn't be able to use his cell phone for directions. Now he doesn't even have the option.

He thinks Chiyoh's plan for an alibi is going to be unnecessary. Will doesn't plan on covering up any evidence at Bedelia's house. Every part of him wants Jack Crawford to know who he has chosen this time. And he knows that Hannibal will make sure they're out of the country and in a safe place by the time anyone knows Bedelia is dead.

Will comes up to the house that matches the address, and he checks his watch. He has a few minutes before he's supposed to be there, so he sets his suitcase and backpack down and takes a deep breath. He doesn't put on the gloves in his pocket. He wants to do this with his bare hands.

The anticipation of seeing Hannibal again is killing him and he doesn't know if he wants to smile, cry or puke at the thought of him being just behind the door. He feels the ring in his pocket, the only thing that has grounded him for months.

With his other hand, he knocks on the door.

Will counts the seconds between his knock and by the time the door opens, and he doesn't even reach five.

Hannibal is there, beautiful as ever, dressed in a black tuxedo, his hair styled, and his face shaved clean. Tears in his eyes, but a smile on his face.

"Will," he breathes.

They just stand there staring at each other, two feet between them.

As much as Will wants to fling himself into Hannibal's arms, he has something else he wants to do first.

"Where is she?" Will asks.

"Will," Hannibal says again, reaching out to cup his face.

Will leans into the touch for just a second before he repeats his question.

Hannibal blinks, and a tear falls down his cheek, then he says, "In the dining room, but—"

Will pushes past him, leaving all of his belongings on the front step. He goes through the house and finds the dining room.

Bedelia is sitting at the head of the table in an evening gown, her arm hooked up to an IV. Will notices right away that one of her legs has been amputated, and he knows for certain that it's supposed to be the main course tonight.

One of her hands rests under the table, and Will knows she's holding some sort of weapon in her hand. He takes a few steps closer, and her eyes follow him lazily. She's on a lot of drugs, that's for sure. Will turns his head slightly and makes sure Hannibal is in the room behind him before he moves forward, and picks up a knife from the table.

"Doctor Du Maurier," Will says, his voice conversational as he walks closer to her. He sees her move the arm under the table, but he won't give her a chance to use whatever is in her hand.

"Mr Graham," she says airily.

Will slits her throat with the knife just as her arm moves. He ends up with an oyster fork in his shoulder.

Blood sprays in his face and across the dining room table, all over his suit, which cost god knows how much. Bedelia grabs at her throat while she bleeds out, gasping and gurgling.

"Why did you do that?" Hannibal asks from behind him.

"Because I wanted to," Will says, finally turning to face Hannibal.

His expression is unreadable in the sense that he's showing several different emotions. Pride, annoyance, anger, amusement. The pride seems to win out because he steps forward and pulls out his pocket square. He hastily wipes the blood off Will's face, then cups both of Will's cheeks.

Hannibal's eyes are searching, asking a question, and Will nods in response.

"Beautiful," Hannibal whispers before crushing his mouth to Will's.

The kiss is desperate, all of the yearning and pain from the last few months melting away from both of them. Will pulls away gasping for breath, and Hannibal kisses his forehead, his cheek, his jaw. His wraps are wrapped so tightly around Will he can't breathe properly, but he doesn't care.

"I love you," Will whispers. "I shouldn't have sent you away."

"It was necessary," Hannibal whispers, kissing the top of Will's head. "For both of us, I believe."

Will doesn't respond, there's time for talking later. Time to explain later, time to tell Hannibal everything he thought of over the last five months, how he regretted sending him away so

soon after, how he found the letter in Molly's house and that just proved to him that he needed Hannibal back. He'll tell him all of that later.

"Let's get out of here," Will murmurs. "I don't care about dinner, I don't care about whatever display you wanted to make of her. I want to go home. Our home."

"Will," Hannibal whispers, full of so much emotion. Will pulls away from where his head is laying on Hannibal's chest and looks up at him. His cheeks are streaked with tears, his face and tux smeared with blood.

"Maybe a shower first," Will suggests.

"You'll leave evidence," Hannibal protests.

"I don't care. Let them all know whose side I'm on. We'll be gone before anyone even knows she's dead," Will says. He's already pulling himself out of Hannibal's arms and walking toward the door to retrieve his bags.

Hannibal follows him closely, and Will understands that he doesn't want to let Will out of his sight for even a second. Not this soon after they've gotten back together. He understands completely.

Will gets his bags inside, and shuts the door, and Hannibal immediately has him pressed to the wall, his entire body against Will's own. Will can feel Hannibal's erection through their pants and moans, low in his throat, his own arousal quickly rising. He presses his hardening cock against Hannibal's, silently begging for more, for *anything*.

Hannibal wastes no time finding the button and zipper of Will's pants, and yanks them down to his knees along with his underwear. He takes Will in his hand, stroking him until he's fully hard, while Will writhes against the wall. He drops his face to Hannibal's shoulder, and clutches at his hips.

It feels *so good* to be touched by Hannibal again. He didn't know if he'd ever get the chance again, but here he is. He feels like he has no control of himself, so overwhelmed by how *badly* he wants Hannibal right now.

"Fuck me," Will whispers. "Right here."

Hannibal practically growls, and removes his hand from Will's cock to rip open his own pants, and by the sound of it, Will is pretty sure he broke his zipper in his haste to free himself. Hannibal unbuttons his suit jacket and pulls out a small bottle.

"Presumptuous," Will laughs.

*"Hopeful,"* Hannibal corrects. "I was hopeful."

Will kicks his pants off the rest of the way and Hannibal grabs one of Will's thighs, hiking it up around his hip. He squeezes the lube onto his fingers and tosses the bottle aside, then reaches between Will's spread legs to circle his entrance.

The touch causes Will to shiver in anticipation, and Hannibal hesitates, eyes once again searching for permission.

“I’m good. Go ahead,” Will whispers, and kisses Hannibal.

Hannibal holds Will’s leg against his hip with one hand, making sure it doesn’t fall back down, and Will’s muscles strain against the stretch in his thigh. His height compared to Hannibal’s makes it so he almost has to push up on the toes still on the ground, but it’s all forgotten when Hannibal pushes a finger inside him.

Will kisses Hannibal again and again while Hannibal stretches him with his fingers. The position is awkward for them both, not the best idea, but Will can’t bring himself to care, can’t bring himself to move somewhere else in the house. He needs Hannibal *now.*

After Hannibal gets three fingers into him, Will begs, “Now, Hannibal. Please. I need you now.”

Hannibal’s breath audible hitches in his throat and he pulls his fingers out of Will, leaving him feeling empty. Hannibal steps away, dropping Will’s leg back to the ground, and Will doesn’t want that, wants to reach out and pull him back and never let him go ever again, but Hannibal comes back a second later, the bottle of lube in his hand.

Will is so hard by now he thinks he might scream if he doesn’t get fucked soon, and it’s clear Hannibal is in the same boat by how his hands shake as he quickly squeezes more lube onto his hand to slick his cock.

They haven’t even bothered to take off their shirts, though Hannibal took off his jacket at some point. Hannibal presses his chest against Will’s, pinning him firmly to the wall, and lifts both of Will’s thighs. Will wraps his arms tightly around Hannibal’s neck, and wraps his legs tight around Hannibal’s waist. Hannibal’s cock is pressing into him just a second later, oh so slowly.

“C’mon, baby,” Will whispers.

Hannibal groans, and presses his face into Will’s neck, as he pushes further into Will’s body.

“I’ve missed you,” Hannibal whispers when he’s fully inside of Will’s body.

Will uses all the leverage he has to start moving his own hips as Hannibal stands still. He moves himself on Hannibal’s cock, not able to get the right angle, or the right pace, and Hannibal barely meets his thrusts, just a gentle rock against each other.

Will is feeling so desperate now, feeling absolutely wrecked, full of so much love, but still so much regret, and yearning, and pain. He just wants to feel close to Hannibal again. He wants to be fucked and he wants to feel Hannibal come deep inside him, and he wants to hurt in a way different than how he has hurt the last five months. He groans out in frustration, and Hannibal seems to know exactly what he’s asking for.

Hannibal tightens his hold around Will's waist and moves them both away from the wall. Will hangs on for dear life, even though he knows Hannibal wouldn't dare drop him. Hannibal's cock slips out of his body as he carries Will into another room, and Will groans at the loss.

He's thrown down onto a couch on his back, and Hannibal climbs between his legs, pushing back into Will in one hard thrust. He leans down to kiss Will while he thrusts into him. Will pulls at Hannibal's shirt, ripping buttons off so he can grab at Hannibal's chest hair, tangle his fingers, and hold on while he kisses him back. They bite at each other's lips, their teeth clank together, and it hurts but it's what Will has needed.

He wraps his legs around Hannibal's waist again, lifting his hips and changing the angle, throwing his head back against the cushion when Hannibal finally hits his prostate. The sounds of their moans, of skin slapping against skin, of their kissing, fill the air around them. They're both chasing their orgasms, using each other's bodies for pleasure, and Will can't stop any of the noises that come out of his mouth.

"Love you," Will murmurs against his lips. Then he starts chanting, "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Please forgive me."

He repeats it, and tears flood in his eyes while he begs for forgiveness.

"Will, shh," Hannibal soothes him. He slows his pace, and the mood shifts entirely. From rough and hot to tender and gentle. "You're forgiven, darling."

Will shakes his head frantically. "You can't, not so quickly. I hit you. I yelled at you. I threw my ring in your face and gave you no certainty I would come back to you."

"But you *did* come back to me," Hannibal whispers, kissing his forehead. "And I forgave you the second I left your home that day. Please believe me."

Will doesn't respond, just swallows down a sob, and pulls Hannibal into a tight embrace. Hannibal continues to thrust languidly into him, and reaches between them to jerk Will off. Will tightens his legs around Hannibal's waist, clenches around Hannibal's cock, and he's getting so close he can't think of anything but the points of contact, and how utterly in love he is. For the first time in his life, he feels like everything is right where it should be.

He comes on Hannibal's hand and all over his shirt, and jacket, with a loud moan, which catches on a sob when he starts to cry again. He feels Hannibal coming hard inside him after three more hard thrusts. Hannibal bites down into Will's shoulder through the fabric as his shirt as he fucks Will through his own orgasm. When he comes to a stop, he doesn't pull out right away, his entire body shaking on top of Will.

"How long do we have?" Will asks.

Hannibal clears his throat, and pulls away, slipping out of Will's body. Will is a mess of blood and come, and Hannibal is just a mess in general, his hands shaking, his face red, lips bloody, either from Bedelia's blood or from biting, Will doesn't know.

He takes another breath before he says, “Enough time to shower, and eat if you’d like to.”

Will has worked up an appetite, and he realizes he’s barely eaten at all in the last few days, stomach in knots because of anxiety and excitement.

“We can display her, if you’d like,” Will whispers. “I know you had plans tonight, and I know I came in here guns blazing.”

“That reminds me. She stabbed you,” Hannibal reminds him.

Will had completely forgotten the oyster fork that went into his shoulder. Somewhere between killing Bedelia and kissing Hannibal, he must have pulled it out but he doesn’t remember. He was so distracted by the power he felt, and by the love he felt, that he didn’t realize.

Will sits up and shrugs, but Hannibal starts carefully unbuttoning Will’s shirt.

He pushes it off his shoulders and looks at the wound that Will can’t see very well himself, just nearly out of his sight line.

Hannibal looks at it with a frown, then stands, holding a hand out for Will.

They shower, Hannibal dresses his wounds, both from the fork and Hannibal’s bite, and they get dressed in casual, inconspicuous clothes.

“I don’t want to display her,” Hannibal says as they both stand in the dining room, staring at his slumped over corpse. “We will leave her where she is.”

“Why?” Will asks.

“Because this was your design, my dear Will. And that is more beautiful than any display I could come up with,” Hannibal answers. “Besides, she doesn’t deserve to be turned into art.”

“I said the same thing to Freddie Lounds before I killed her,” Will whispers.

Will feels Hannibal’s hand nudge his own before they bring them together, lacing their fingers as they stand side by side. They hold tight to each other for long minutes, just looking at Bedelia’s body and the pool of blood around her.

They both turn to look at each other at the same time. And now, Will knows his heart is right where it belongs. Devoured by Hannibal, just as he has consumed Hannibal’s heart in return.

# Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

The epilogue just to wrap some things up

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*A year later*

Will sings in the kitchen while he waits for Hannibal to come home. He's been gone for four days on a hunt, and he's due back any minute. Will has missed him dearly, but someone had to stay home with the dogs, as they couldn't get a sitter again so soon after the last time.

*"Off the Florida Keys, there's a place called Kokomo,"* Will sings, dancing around the kitchen while the song plays on the speaker in the corner.

He's making a cake to celebrate the anniversary of them reuniting at Bedelia's house, even though he knows that it's not at all necessary. But in their time in their house out in the French countryside, with not much else to do, he has found that he loves baking. And Hannibal loves when he bakes.

As he sings *"Aruba, Jamaica, oh I want to take you to,"* he hears the front door open and shut. He just barely hears the squeak of Hannibal's plastic suit as he walks into the kitchen, and Will points his wooden spoon at him, and sings, *"Bermuda, Bahama, come on pretty mama"*

Hannibal smiles fondly at him, and Will shuts off the speakers with the remote next to him, silencing the Beach Boys mid song.

"Why are you still in that suit?" Will asks. "Come home to finally finish me off?"

Hannibal frowns at him, then says, "Not at all, my love. Besides, our prints and bodily fluids are all over this home. There would be no point in trying not to leave evidence here."

In fact the only reason they still wear plastic suits when they kill is so there's no *substantial* evidence that it was them. All of their kills are classic Ripper, or *Il Mostro* designs, along with some of Will's own designs. It can't be hard for authorities to know it's them, but without proper proof, and with an impressive amount of copycats in other countries, it's easy to keep themselves under the radar.

Except for with Bedelia of course. Hannibal and Will were just barely out of the United Kingdom, on a speed boat crossing the channel, when the authorities were alerted. Their prints were all over the house, their semen all over the couch and shower, their bloody clothes left just strewn wherever they were dropped. There was no hiding that it was them.

Jack Crawford released a statement saying he thinks Will was kidnapped and coerced by Hannibal, and Will doesn't think he has ever seen Hannibal so mad about anything.

When a forensics team went through Will's old house in Wolf Trap and found Hannibal's prints, along with his blood and semen, with no signs of struggle anywhere in Will's house, Jack released another statement saying anything is still possible.

When they got married, with their real names—however Hannibal managed to pull that off, he doesn't know—and they sent Jack a photo of their ceremony, and another one of them kissing, Jack finally released a statement saying it's likely Will is also dangerous. There's bounties on both of their heads now.

Will was able to contact Molly, and arranged for his stuff to be shipped out only a few days after they got into their new house. And what a beautiful house it is. A 16th century *manor,* really. South of Toulouse. Hannibal lied about having a house built for them, but a lot of it has been recently renovated, so Will figures that's what he actually meant. Remote, with a stream for Will, and lots of room for the dogs. They each have their own room for their personal things, or for when they just need space from each other, which isn't often, but never a bad thing. They have a bedroom that they share more nights than they don't, tangled up in each other's arms.

"Are you listening to me?" Hannibal asks, pulling Will out of his thoughts of the past year.

"Nope," Will answers, going back to stirring the bowl of cake batter on the counter.

"I said we are having an old friend for dinner tonight, and I wish for you to come help me," Hannibal says.

His hair is getting quite long now, falling over his forehead and into his eyes, over his shoulders. The sun shines through the kitchen windows, highlighting Hannibal's cheekbones and nose, shining in his dark hair, and bringing out the strands of grey. Will gets distracted by his husband's beauty, and completely forgets what Hannibal just said to him.

When he snaps out of it, he says, "Aren't all of our old friends dead?" Will asks.

"Alana and Jack are not," Hannibal says.

"Hm. Right. So it's either Alana or Jack in your trunk then," Will says, going back to his mixing. He pours the batter into two circle pans, and puts them both into the preheated oven.

"Will, come outside," Hannibal says, firm and without any patience left.

"Fine," Will sighs. He washes his hands and removes his apron, draping it over one of the stools at the counter.

He follows Hannibal out of the front door and to their driveway, and stops dead in his tracks when he sees Molly leaning against Hannibal's car, a suitcase next to her, and a backpack slung over one shoulder.

"Hey, stranger," Molly calls out.

Will turns to look at Hannibal, a smirk on his face. “We’re not—” Will whispers to him. “She’s not—”

“No, Will. She’s *visiting,”* Hannibal tells him. “Did you really think I was going to kill Molly?”

“You’re wearing the suit!” Will says, exasperated.

But then he crosses the driveway and pulls Molly into a huge hug.

“Why were you gone for four days?” Will asks Hannibal when he releases Molly.

“I had her fly into Lisbon,” Hannibal shrugs.

*“Portugal!?”* Will yells. “That’s like a thirteen hour drive!”

“Yes, and I’m quite exhausted,” Hannibal says.

“Me too,” Molly says.

“Yeah, let’s get you set up in a guest room,” Will says. “Hannibal is going to have to stay up, though.”

“Why?” Hannibal groans.

They start walking into the house, and Will catches the look of awe on Molly’s face at the size of it.

“How many rooms does this place have?” she asks.

“Something like eleven bedrooms,” Will shrugs. “We don’t use them all as bedrooms.”

“Do you guys host parties?” Molly asks, looking around at the vast sitting room, and through the door into the large kitchen.

“Not yet. Hannibal hasn’t inserted himself into society yet,” Will says. He turns to Hannibal, “Will you go check on the cake?”

Hannibal nods and leaves Will alone with Molly.

“So how long have you two been planning this?” Will asks.

“Since about two days after you left last year,” Molly says. “I wanted to be there for your wedding, but we decided that would be a really bad idea if I were in Europe the same time you guys got hitched.”

“Is Jack still on you?” Will asks.

“A bit. He calls every couple of weeks to ask if I’ve heard from you. I always say no,” Molly says.

“Where’s Wally?” Will asks.

“Staying home with Reba. They get along pretty well.”

“Better than me and him?” Will asks.

“A lot better than you and him,” Molly laughs.

Will opens the door to a bedroom, and brings her bags in.

“Did he tell you I thought he was out killing these last four days?” Will asks. He gets clean sheets out of the closet, and puts them on the bed, then goes into the bathroom to see Hannibal has already stocked it with a lot of essentials. Will wonders if all the bathrooms are like that. He doesn’t go into most of them, so he wouldn’t know.

“Yes. It was my idea for him to make you think he brought someone home to kill,” Molly says.

“He said we’re having an old friend for dinner. Normally when he says that it means we’re going to *eat* them, not *with* them.”

“Yes, I know. Will, we planned this entire thing. We had a lot of time to talk to each other,” Molly says.

“Don’t even tell me what you talked about,” Will says, throwing his hands in the air. “I’m going to leave you to nap. You didn’t bring a phone did you? I don’t need Jack Crawford tracing any calls to this place. I really like it here.”

“No, I left it at home. Brought a burner for emergencies,” Molly says. “Hannibal told me to.”

“Jesus, he really thought of everything,” Will murmurs to himself. “How long are you staying?”

“About a week,” Molly says. “I’m going to take a nap now. I’ll come downstairs when I get up.”

Will nods, heading toward the door. “Feel free to explore. Hannibal and I might turn in early tonight. I’m making him stay up until he passes out.”

“Why?”

“Because he lied to me,” Will shrugs.

He leaves the room and goes down to the kitchen to find Hannibal pulling the cakes out of the oven and setting them on the island to cool. He rests on his elbows against the counter and looks at Will through the stray hairs in his face. He has since removed his plastic suit, and it’s packed away somewhere out of sight.

“I cannot believe you,” Will says.

“Are you unhappy Molly is here?” Hannibal asks.

“No, I’m very happy she’s here. I’ve missed her, and she’s my best friend,” Will says.

“Then what is the reason you are so upset?” Hannibal asks.

“You lied to me,” Will frowns. “And you could’ve had her fly in closer so you wouldn’t have been gone so long.”

“It wouldn’t have been wise,” Hannibal says, standing up straight. He steps closer and looms over Will. “You’re well aware that we cannot stay here forever. I know how much you love this place, and I want to do everything in my power to ensure we can stay as long as possible. Having Molly fly in closer could have led authorities right to our doorstep.”

Will sighs. “I know, I know. I’ve just missed you. I hate when you’re gone.”

“And I hate when I’m gone,” Hannibal whispers. He cups Will’s cheeks and kisses his forehead.

He goes to the fridge and starts to pull out various items, then goes into the freezer and pulls out other things, and Will recognizes he’s getting the ingredients to make smoothies, something Will has grown to love in the time they’ve been living here. Hannibal always seems to make him one when he’s upset about something.

“I’ve been meaning to ask you,” Hannibal says after a minute.

“Hm?” Will hums.

“What did you ever do with that journal?” Hannibal asks as he slices a banana.

Will has forgotten about that journal in the year that they’ve been here. He’s had no real reason to think about it. With consistent sex, and with Hannibal always doing new drawings of him (with a live model this time), it hasn’t been necessary.

He supposes it was a huge part of the beginning of their sexual and romantic relationship, and that it was three years worth of work on Hannibal’s part. He should have known it was only a matter of time before Hannibal asked about it.

“I burned it,” Will says with a slight shrug.

Hannibal glances up at him, an amused, but rather skeptical look on his face. His eyebrow is slightly raised, and Will knows Hannibal doesn’t believe him at all.

“No, seriously. I burned it about a month before Bedelia’s house,” Will says, as serious as he can.

“How did that make you feel? Was it cathartic for you?”

“I decided I didn’t need it anymore, and I threw it in the fire. It wasn’t real. It wasn’t *us*. I felt bad for maybe thirty seconds before I turned the TV back on and forgot about it,” Will says.

“I honestly haven’t thought much of it recently, at all.”

“Well, of course not. Why would you? We have sex regularly, it’s not as though you need the reading material,” Hannibal says, going back to cutting fruit and dropping it into the blender.

“Wait—Hannibal, I don’t want that,” Will says, pointing to the blender.

“What if it’s meant for me?” Hannibal asks.

“Is it?”

“No,” he answers. He stops cutting up fruit and puts everything away for later. He turns and looks at Will, who hasn’t moved at all.

They stare at each other for another thirty seconds, and Will takes in all of Hannibal’s beauty. After a year of being together nearly every day, he still can’t believe Hannibal is truly *his*.

“Did you want something else?” Hannibal asks.

“I want you,” Will whispers.

He’ll never not want Hannibal. Their first few days in the house, Will slept more hours than he was awake, and during that entire time, he laid on top of Hannibal so the other man couldn’t leave him.

When he was finally over the exhaustion from travel and stress, and was able to explore the grounds, he made Hannibal go with him, not wanting him out of his sight for even a second.

He still feels this way most days.

With Hannibal having been gone the last few days, Will wants nothing more than to drag him to bed and keep him there, taking him apart for hours.

Hannibal steps around the island and stops in front of Will, just a few inches away. He leans forward and kisses Will soft and slow. They have all the time in the world, no longer do they have to worry about rushed encounters in Will’s house in Wolf Trap, or against the wall in Bedelia’s foyer.

“I put Molly in the room furthest from ours,” Will tells him when he pulls away from the kiss. “And she’ll be asleep for a while.”

Hannibal smiles and kisses his forehead before stepping away and leaving the kitchen. Will wastes no time before following behind Hannibal up to the master bedroom.

Will pins him against the closed door once they’re inside, and presses his thigh between Hannibal’s legs. He kisses him with more urgency than in the kitchen, needing Hannibal, after just four days apart.

He has no idea how he survived any of their separations in the past if he feels this way after a few days.

Hannibal regains control a second later, picking Will up and carrying him over to the bed. He's no longer so fragile during their intimate moments, no longer shaking, losing his composure until he's a stuttering mess. Sometimes Will can make Hannibal forget himself like those first few times, but sometimes he doesn't. Will knows a large part of it is Hannibal finally accepting that Will's love is real, and getting used to the idea that he's allowed to have this.

With Hannibal becoming more comfortable with the way they are, comes a constant battle of both of them trying to gain some sort of upper hand. Just as it had been in the past, when they were constantly at each other's throats, but now it's done with love, and because it's fun. Not like it used to be.

It happens now, when Hannibal climbs onto the bed with Will and settles between his legs, and begins unbuttoning his own shirt. Will sits up and turns quickly, forcing Hannibal off of him and onto the bed beside him. He climbs over Hannibal, straddling his hips. He pulls off his own t-shirt and throws it into the corner of the room, then rips the remaining buttons off of Hannibal's shirt.

That's a common occurrence, too. Will hates all of Hannibal's stupid buttons.

Hannibal reaches for him, and Will knows he's going to try flipping them again, so he pins Hannibal's hands to the mattress above his head.

"Stay."

Hannibal doesn't bother struggling against him, or changing the position again. Will leans down and rewards him with a kiss. Hannibal chases after his lips when Will pulls away, but he's not quick enough.

Will pushes himself up with the hands around Hannibal's wrists, and rolls his hips, feeling Hannibal's erection against his ass through both of their pants.

"Will you stay there if I get up?" Will asks.

"No promises," Hannibal says with a sly smile.

Will takes that as what it is, and gets up anyway to take off his pants and underwear. Hannibal does move from his spot on the center of the bed to reach into his nightstand, retrieving the lube, and tossing it onto the bed.

He pushes his shirt off his arms, then lays down, pushing his hips up, and his pants down. He gets his pants and underwear off, tossing everything across the room, then sits up with his legs spread on the bed in front of him. Will climbs into his lap, sitting facing him on his knees. He cups Hannibal's jaw and cheek with each hand and looks into his eyes.

"Don't disappear on me for four days again," Will whispers before joining their lips together.

Hannibal wraps his arms around Will's waist and pulls him so their bodies are flush to each other, cocks trapped next to each other between their stomachs.

"You may come with us to the airport in a week," Hannibal whispers, rocking his hips up as best as he can with Will's weight on top of him.

Will reaches for the lube resting on the bed next to Hannibal's hip, and opens it, squeezing some onto his fingers.

He can tell Hannibal is about to move to get himself into a better position for Will, but Will shakes his head and pushes up on his knees, reaching behind himself and pushing one finger inside.

Hannibal moans quietly at the sight of Will fingering himself, and runs his hands up and down Will's flanks, hips, and thighs as he does so. Normally Hannibal will prepare Will, or vice versa, but Will's taking charge by doing it himself today. Practically putting on a show for his husband.

Will places his other hand on Hannibal's shoulder for balance, and adds another finger. He has to arch his back a bit to reach, pushing his hips forward so his cock drags against Hannibal's chest, leaving a mess of precum in his chest hair.

One of Hannibal's fingers joins Will's two and Will rocks down onto both of their fingers, needing *more.*

"Fuck, baby," Will groans.

Hannibal smiles up at him and removes his finger, then grabs Will's wrist and pulls it away, so Will's fingers slip out. Hannibal replaces them with three of his own. Hannibal stretches him for much longer than Will needs, and Will is *sure* Hannibal is trying to torture him. He's about to say something when Hannibal removes his fingers.

Will's impatience must be more apparent than he thought.

Hannibal wraps his arms around Will's waist, and tries to flip them over, but Will plants his knees back down, and says, "No. Like this."

He unwraps Hannibal's arms from his waist, and Hannibal flops down on his back again. He brings his knees up just a bit, and pushes his hips up against Will's ass, his hard cock rubbing against Will's hole. Will leans down to kiss him as he grabs Hannibal's cock and lines himself up.

When Hannibal is fully inside him, Will takes a second to adjust to the feeling. Hannibal's hands roam over his thighs and hips, but Will grabs him by the wrists and pins both of Hannibal's hands to the pillow above his head.

He starts to move, slow at first, then picks up the pace, pulling moans and gasps from Hannibal. Will smirks down at him, watching as his husband's walls shatter, all his defenses that he needed while he was away from home quickly crumbling away.

“Do you remember our first time?” Will asks, leaning down to brush his lips against Hannibal’s.

Hannibal practically whimpers when Will says it, and he nods. Will doesn’t relent the pace he’s moving on Hannibal’s cock, and he knows neither of them will last long if he keeps it up, but seeing Hannibal like this is enough for him not to care.

“Of course you do,” Will whispers. “I think I broke you that day. You weren’t Hannibal the Cannibal, or the Chesapeake Ripper that night. You weren’t even Doctor Hannibal Lecter. You were just *mine.”*

“Yours,” Hannibal agrees. His eyes are screwed shut, and his arms struggle against Will’s grip.

Will lets go of his wrists and rests one hand on Hannibal’s chest, gripping his chest hair while he rides him hard and fast. He wraps his other hand around his own cock, jerking himself off just as fast. One of Hannibal’s hands stays where Will had them, but the other grips Will’s thigh so hard he knows it’ll bruise.

“It was amazing seeing you come undone because of just one kiss,” Will murmurs, his voice catching on quiet gasps, trying to choke down moans. “That’s all you needed, yeah? Sometimes that’s all you need, even now. I love seeing you like this, baby, you don’t even know how much.”

“Will,” Hannibal whispers. He opens his eyes, and they shine with tears.

Will is on the brink of his orgasm, and by the way Hannibal is pushing his hips up and gripping Will’s thigh tighter, he knows Hannibal is close too.

“No one else has even seen you like I have,” Will whispers. “And no one else ever will.”

Just before he falls over the edge, he leans down, kisses Hannibal, and whispers, “You’re beautiful.”

Hannibal lets out a loud groan and Will can feel him coming inside him, just as Will comes all over Hannibal’s stomach and chest.

Will sits there for another few seconds, both of them catching their breath while Will leans forward onto his hands, both resting on Hannibal’s chest. Will lifts his hips so Hannibal’s cock slips out of him, and he feels the come start to leave his body. Instead of moving to get cleaned up, he just sits, straddling Hannibal’s stomach, just making even more of a mess.

“You know why I threw that journal away?” Will asks.

“Hm?”

Hannibal is completely blissed out, uncaring of the mess of come on his stomach, or the fact that Will’s weight is definitely going to get uncomfortable in a minute or two. He very slowly moves the hand resting on the pillow to lay on top of one of the hands on his chest.

“Because I only took it so I could find you, and some answers,” Will explains. “I thought it would help me figure out how I feel, or where you were, or how I could earn you back.”

“You didn’t need it for that,” Hannibal mumbles, his accent thicker than normal, still full of emotion.

“Exactly my point,” Will smiles. “I was looking to you for answers I needed to answer for myself. I know how I feel, and I figured that out on my own while we were apart. So I read the entry about my aftershave, and you wanted to fuck me through the air holes of your cell, then I laughed until I cried, and threw it in the fire.”

Hannibal hums in response, and shuts his eyes again, resting against the pillow. He runs his hand up and down Will’s bare thigh again

“I am grateful you figured out what you want,” Hannibal says after a minute of silence. He opens his eyes and glances up at Will again, who just stares down at him, a faint smile on his face.

“Me too,” Will agrees. “You want to shower with me, then watch me decorate my cake?”

Hannibal groans, and releases Will’s hand and thigh to stretch his hands above his head, groaning louder this time. Will feels the muscles in Hannibal’s abdomen flex underneath his ass as Hannibal stretches, then relaxes again.

“I would quite like a nap,” Hannibal says.

“No,” Will whispers with a malicious grin. “I don’t want to nap, and I’m not letting you out of my sight for about… four days.”

“You are cruel,” Hannibal whispers. He sits up, forcing Will off of him, and gets out of the bed.

Will never thought he’d have this domesticity with Hannibal. A quick shower, where they wash each other’s hair and bodies, then they dress side by side in their walk-in closet. Downstairs, Hannibal sits at the island in the kitchen while Will layers and frosts the cake across from him. They glance up at each other every few minutes, smiling as they do.

Hannibal reads Will the latest article that was put out about their escape, revealing that Jack is retiring from the FBI to focus on his health and move on with his life, rather than focus on Hannibal and Will. Will thinks Jack may have just decided they aren’t worth his time anymore. Or maybe Jack has just accepted that Hannibal and Will belong together. Not to be separated ever again.

God knows that’s how Will feels. And Will knows that’s how Hannibal feels, too.

Chapter End Notes

And that's it! Please leave comments, kudos, and share it with your friends if you enjoyed this. I have only been writing fanfic for about seven months, so feedback is much appreciated. Thanks for reading!! I've been considering writing another part that explores the same timeframe but from Hannibal's perspective if anyone's interested? Let me know. It's not a priority, but if a lot of people would find that interesting I would be willing to write it.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!